

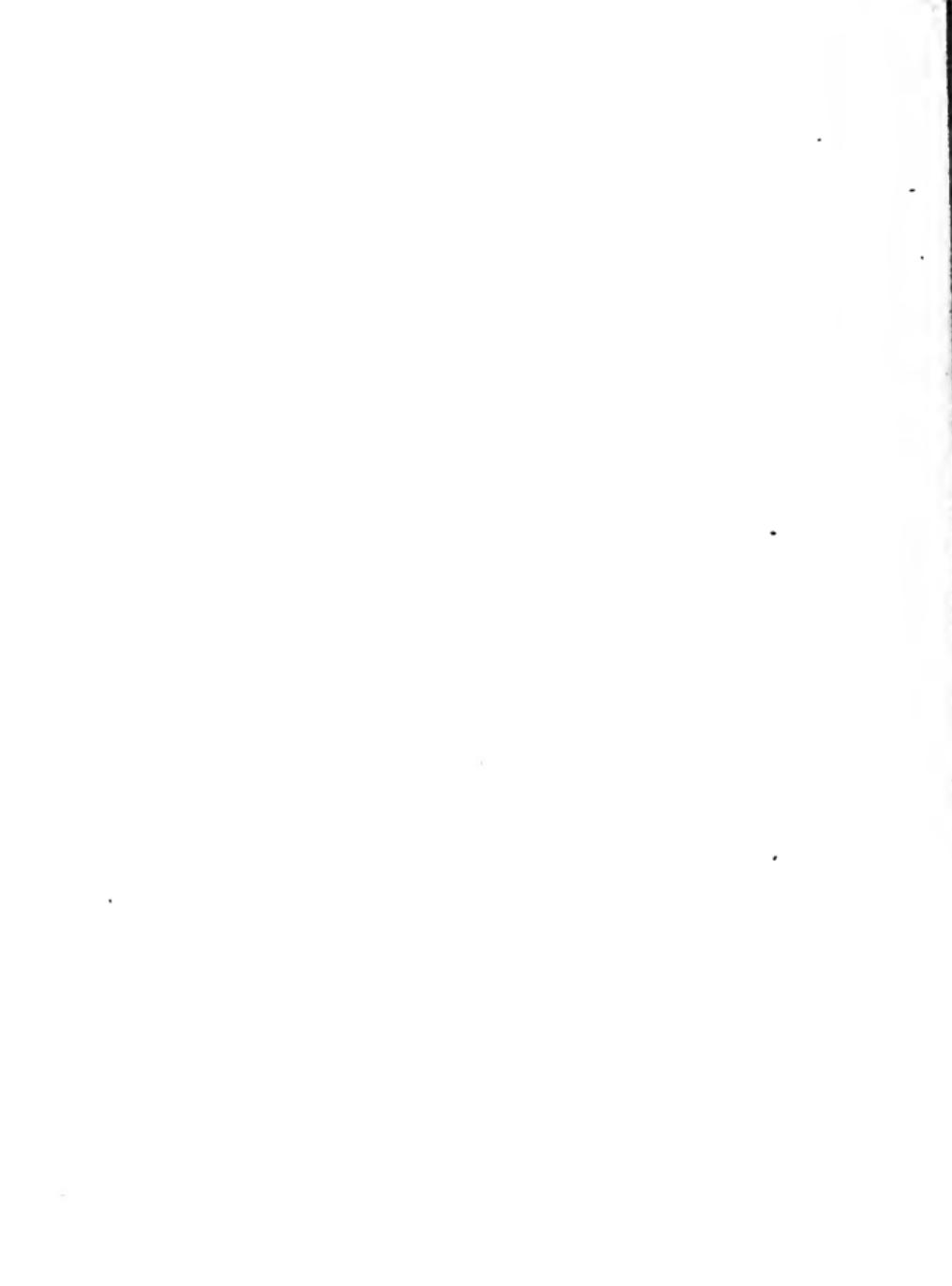
“Things we Thought of”

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Mrs. George Wemyss

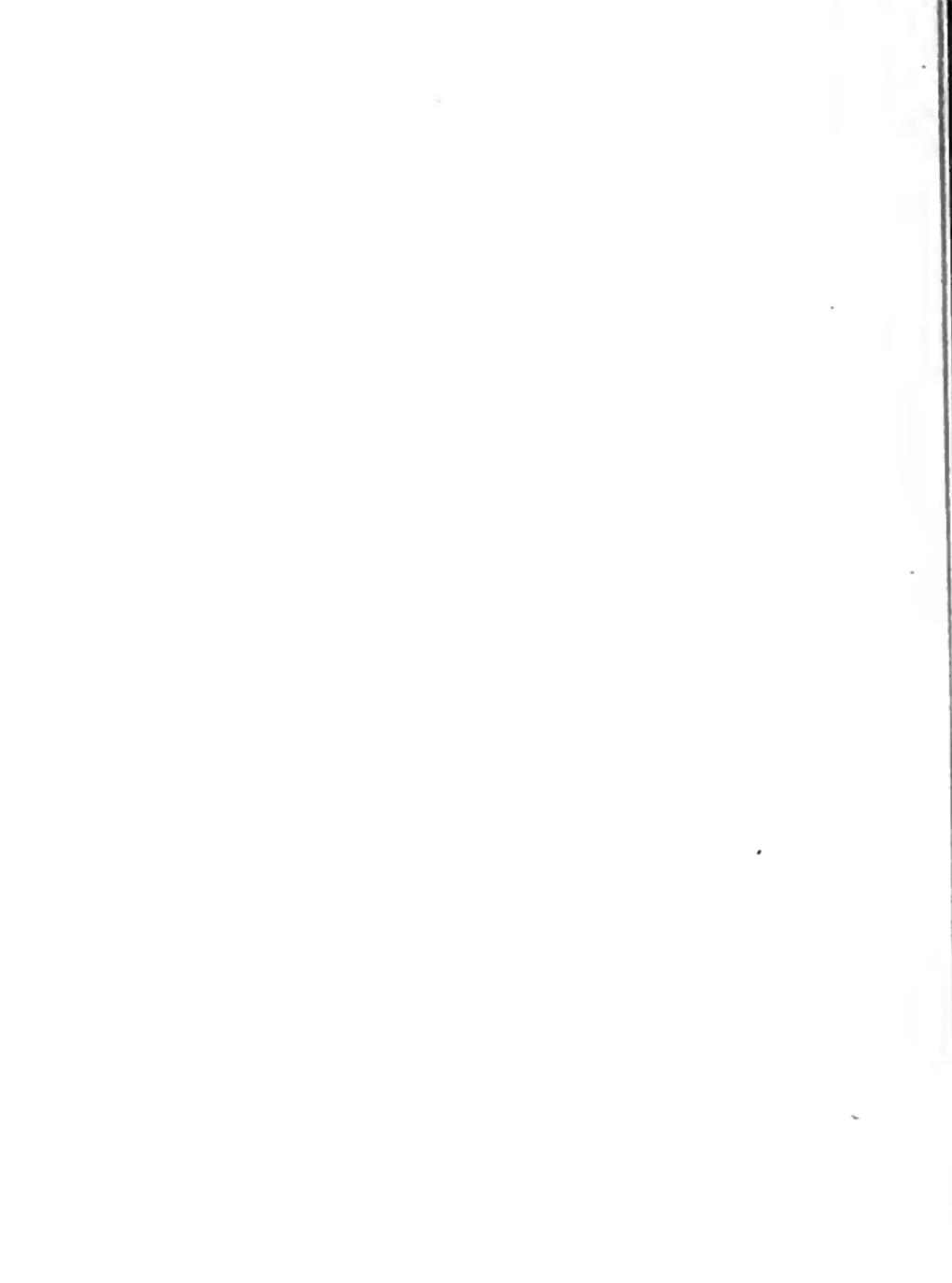


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“Things we Thought of”







“Things we Thought of”

TOLD FROM A CHILD'S POINT
OF VIEW

BY

MRS. GEORGE WEMYSS

Author of “All About All of Us”

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“Things we Thought of”



I



DON'T suppose a more surprising thing ever happened, not more surprising than when Tony came to live with Mr. Beaufort and Miss Wilhelmina.

It was so surprising, because they didn't know he was coming, till just before. We didn't either. It happened like this. We were at tea. We hadn't got further than bread and butter—Pat says he had, but then he always gets furthest quicker than we do ; I suppose it's because he eats faster : well, we hadn't got quite to cake when mother came in, and she said, “ Guess, children, what

has happened ? ” We all guessed ; but not right. Billy guessed that Mrs. Carter had a baby. But she hadn’t ; at least not then.

She does sometimes.

I gave one of her babies a doll, which I dressed myself, and its clothes all took off except its boots, which were painted on its legs, which isn’t a very good plan ; but babies don’t mind.

Mrs. Carter said she was glad they were painted boots and not real ones, because if they were real ones the baby would be sure to lose them. Mother said I oughtn’t to give the doll to the baby if the painted boots could lick off, because the baby would be sure to be ill ; so I just tried, and the paint didn’t come off, so I think it must have been china and not paint.

But I must go on telling you about the guesses.

We all guessed, but no one guessed right. Pat says he guessed right, only he didn't say so till afterwards, so it wasn't much good.

Then mother said, “ Wrong, children, wrong.” And then after a little she said, “ A little boy is coming to live with Mr. Beaufort and Miss Wilhelmina ! A little boy all the way from a far-off country. A lonely little boy called Tony, with no father and no mother, and no brothers and no sisters.” And Baby said, “ And no dollies.”

And mother said, “ And no dollies, Baby ; but you would give him some of yours if he wanted them, wouldn't you ? ” and Baby said, “ No.” But she is a baby and doesn't mean to be unkind. She would lend her dollies, only she doesn't want to.

Then mother told us that once Mr. Beaufort had a brother called Anthony, and he was quite good, only he was always laugh-

ing and joking, and he was never serious. Old Mr. Beaufort was always serious, and our Mr. Beaufort was always serious, and Miss Wilhelmina was always serious, so they didn't understand Anthony.

But he was good all the time, only they wanted him to be serious and he couldn't, because he didn't feel serious, I suppose. Then at last he went right away to a far-off country because they didn't understand him ; and then mother said old Mr. Beaufort was very sad, really. And he got sadder and sadder every day because he really wanted Anthony to come back, but he wouldn't say so. He went on being angry all the time. And he watched and watched, mother says, for Anthony to come back, but he didn't.

Once in church when Mr. White, that's our clergyman, was reading about the



Prodigal Son in the Bible, old Mr. Beaufort got up and walked out of church. And lots of the people in the church cried because all the gardeners and the coachmen and the grooms and Mr. White, and the poor people loved Anthony, and wanted him to come back.

They understood him because they weren't so very serious, I suppose—anyhow not so serious as old Mr. Beaufort and our Mr. Beaufort and Miss Wilhelmina.

I expect some people thought old Mr. Beaufort had hiccups when he went out of church, like Baby had once, but he hadn't ; it was sadness made him go.

Anthony didn't come back because he thought they didn't want him.

Then old Mr. Beaufort hardened his heart against Anthony, like Pharaoh did, and said he shouldn't have any money, and he

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died and was buried, and he wanted to see Anthony all the time, but he had hardened his heart, and mother says when you harden your heart you can't say nice things if you want to ever so much, you can't ; so I don't think it is a good thing to do.

Then our Mr. Beaufort wrote to Anthony and told him old Mr. Beaufort was dead and asked him to come home, but Anthony was too proud ; he didn't know about the hardness of heart, but just thought his father hadn't loved him when he had all the time, at least mother says so, and she knows, because she always understands. Then he died, but not for ever so long, and he sent his little boy home, and the little boy was Tony who was coming when we didn't know he was. Anthony wrote a long letter to Miss Wilhelmina, and Miss Wilhelmina showed it to mother, and they both

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cried, and mother says it was a beautiful letter, and Miss Wilhelmina said, “Oh, Anthony ! why didn’t I understand ? How blind I was ! ”

I didn’t think she was blind, but she does wear spectacles sometimes. But mother says that is what she said, so I don’t quite know what she meant, and mother didn’t tell me any more.

Well, we were excited.

We didn’t eat so very much tea after that, only a little cake and some bread and jam, and then some more bread and butter to finish up. We always finish up with bread and butter.

On Sundays we have sausages for breakfast, and we see who can eat the most pieces of bread with one sausage. Pat had thirteen once, which was very good.

Well, now, I must tell you about Mr.

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Beaufort and Miss Wilhelmina. They live quite near us.

I suppose it's the biggest house in the world.

Pat says it isn't so big as St. Paul's Cathedral. But that isn't a house. Pat says it is; it's the House of the Lord, so I don't quite know.

Anyhow, Beaufort is the biggest other sort of house.

Our house isn't so frightfully big, but it's very nice.

It's covered with roses—at least in summer it is—and when Madielle found an earwig in her sponge she screamed and screamed, and it was only an earwig all the time.

Her name is Mademoiselle, but we call her Madielle because it's shorter. She doesn't mind. She does mind lots of things. But mother says that's because she is far away

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from her own home, and she likes French children better than English children, so we must try and be good, and so we do ; but we can't always, and I don't suppose French children are always. They ought to be extra good, because they haven't got any horrid French verbs to learn like we have. They just know them without learning them.

When people write their lives I think they say something about when they were born, but I don't exactly remember that. But mother does, and Nannie does, and lots of other people remember it, and mother was pleased and every one was pleased. That's because I was a girl. Nannie likes boys best, but she says she likes me now that I've come, and she likes Biddy and Baby too. Mother had a lot of boys, so she didn't want any more just then, but she wanted a girl.

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Once some one asked Billy if he collected stamps, and he said, “No, but my mother collects boys.” But she doesn’t really, at least I don’t think it’s called collecting. Well, then, I didn’t remember anything for ever so long, and if you don’t remember things you can’t so very well tell about them, because they mightn’t be true. This is going to be a real story about all sorts of people. It’s going to be about all sorts of things too, and all about what father says and what mother says and what everybody says and what everybody does.

At least if I can remember the things, but I don’t suppose I can.

Then I think people in real books tell all the famous things about their families. I think there are lots of famous things about our family, only I don’t exactly know them.

But mother does.

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Pat can sleep with one eye open.
I suppose that is a little famous.
He doesn't know he does it, but he does
it all the same.

It's just open because it won't shut, I
suppose.

Pat thinks it's rather grand.
But it isn't him at all that does it ; it's
his eye does it all by itself.

I think that the Duke of Clarence, who
was drowned in a butt of wine, was one of
our relations ; at least I think he was. But I
don't much care if he wasn't, and Pat doesn't
either, but Billy thinks it's better to be a
relation of a drowned royal person than not
to be a relation at all, but I don't know.

Pat says people can be famous without
knowing it. He says somebody once woke
up and found he had been famous all night
and didn't know it.

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Mother is going to ask the doctor about Pat's eye.

Miss Wilhelmina wanted to take Tony to the doctor because she thought he was telling lies when he was only “pretending” all the time.

Pretending is a game we play when you pretend to be all sorts of things when you aren't.

Mother doesn't take us to the doctor for that sort of thing, but for some other sorts of things sometimes, but not often.

He doesn't say much. He only says, “I've got a little girl at home.”

He always says that.

When Pat went to school once he had a sore throat, and he wrote and said the doctor had been and found his “yugle was in flames.”

But it wasn't really.

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When the doctor came to see Biddy once, he felt her legs, and she hit him like anything in the chest, and said, “ How dare you touch my legs ! ”

But he didn’t mind.

He gave Billy some medicine once, which Billy liked very much.

It was white, and tasted nice and sweet, and Billy had it by his bed so that he could have some in the night. Then, when he was asleep, the other boys took away the real bottle and put another bottle with soap and water in it instead, and Billy drank that and he didn’t like it.

But it wasn’t kind, and they didn’t do it again, because mother doesn’t like us to do those sort of things. She doesn’t mind other sorts of things, so we do those.

But this is a proper story, so I must tell you something about father.

He is something very clever in London, I think, and we mayn't talk to him sometimes in the evenings.

But in the country I don't think he is always so very clever, because he plays with us like anything, and I don't suppose very clever people play so very much with their children. But in London I expect he is.

He never gets cross—except when he feels cross, and that is when he feels tired, mother says, so we don't bother him then.

Fathers and mothers are tired sometimes, but I don't suppose children are.

I think very clever people are often cross ; at least Madielle is, and I suppose she is clever.

Mark says he doesn't believe she is so very after all, because father says very clever people always say when they don't know things, but Madielle tells us to look in the



dictionary for ourselves, and it isn't there at all, so it's no use looking. While I was just being a baby and not remembering things, the boys were doing things all the time.

Then when I began to remember, I had a chair covered with roses, real pink roses ; that's because it was my birthday.

I never had roses on other days. I don't suppose many people have roses on their chair, but I did.

When I was quite little we went to the seaside, and where we went to once there were some soldiers and a target. A target is what soldiers shoot at and try to hit, but they don't always ; at least Pat says he doesn't suppose they do. Well, the boys went and spoilt the target. I don't quite know how, but they did, and then when we were in our lodgings the soldiers came and they asked to see the boys. They had red

coats on and we were frightened. So I prayed and prayed in a loud voice and it was all right ; the boys didn't go to prison like we thought they would. They just didn't do anything except be sorry.

Now I must tell you that there are in our family, father and mother, and Jack and Pat and Mark, and Biddy and Billy, and Baby and Peggie, that's me.

Jack and Mark aren't our real brothers ; they are cousins really, but they are just the same as real brothers, and they call mother, mother, just like we do, only she isn't really. When their father died and their mother died they were what are called orphans, at least Nannie says they were, and when some one said no one had room for two boys, mother said, “There is always room for children with no father and no mother. Send them to me.”

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So they came. That was when they were quite babies, before I can remember, and mother loves them just the same as she loves us.

I don't see why there's always room for children without fathers and mothers, because the house mightn't be big enough, but mother says there's always room, and I expect she knows.

Jack can do lots of things.

He can say the alphabet backwards in three languages, and he can stand up on a pony bare-backed when it's going quite slowly.

Pat can't say the alphabet backwards—not even in English quite right ; but he can turn head over heels backwards, which is nearly as good, I suppose ; and he can sleep with one eye open, as I said before. Then he can move his ears all by themselves.

Mark can't do any of those things, but he has a gift of his own. He can whistle without screwing up his mouth, and he can make a face like a rabbit.

Mr. Black, that's the curate, says he would give five pounds if he could whistle like Mark does; but he can't, because Mark tried to teach him, and it took all the afternoon, and then he didn't do it. Mark thought he would get five pounds, but he didn't.

Billy doesn't do anything much. He says things.

II

WELL, then, Tony came.

We didn't see him properly the first day. We got behind a hedge when the carriage passed, and we just saw his hat, but not him.

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It would be jolly to live at Beaufort if mother and father, and Jack and the boys, and Biddy and Baby, and Nannie and Emma, and Mrs. West and all the others could come too, but I don't suppose Mr. Beaufort would like it.

He doesn't much like children, and we don't much like him. But we like Miss Wilhelmina. The day Tony came Biddy lost her canary. We thought it was lost for ever, but it wasn't.

We saw it in a tree, and Biddy just put some seeds out on the lawn, and I made a noise like a canary, at least rather like, but the canary didn't come.

He flew farther off. Then Jack came and he said he would get a ladder, and he got a ladder, and he put it against the tree where the canary was, and then he climbed up the ladder, and up a little bit of the tree,



and put out his hand ever so gently, and just as he got hold, the canary flew away. But not all the canary! His tail was in Jack's hand.

Jack was surprised when he saw the tail. He brought it to Biddy, and it didn't make her a bit happy, and she cried and cried.

Then Madielle told her she ought to be thankful for what she could get. It wasn't every little girl who even got her canary's tail back.

And Biddy said what was the use of the tail if your darling canary wasn't there too, and I think Biddy was quite right. Tails can't sing and eat out of your hand like canaries can.

Then we put the cage on the lawn, and then we had tea.

Suddenly in the middle of tea Pat had a

feeling, and he went out, and the canary was in the cage.

So it was all right after all, and the canary wasn't lost, but we couldn't stick on the tail. Pat said it didn't so much matter, as it wasn't a dog.

If a dog's tail came off you couldn't tell when he was pleased ; and Pat was quite right, you couldn't tell if a dog was pleased if he hadn't got a tail to wag.

Pat thinks of good things, but I think the canary was pleased all the same.

Mother said we mustn't bother Tony just at first, because he would be tired after such a long voyage, and he would feel strange, and that Miss Wilhelmina must have him to herself, and a lot more things she said, so we didn't.

But then a note came from Miss Wilhelmina. We were at breakfast when a groom

brought it ; and we ran out to give the horse some sugar. We always give horses that come some sugar because they like it. We keep it in a blue bowl on the hall table on purpose.

This was a lovely brown horse called Chancellor, and Billy asked if it was tame, and the groom said it was quite tame, so Billy patted it, but he doesn't generally.

Then we ran in and took the note to mother, and she opened it and she read it, and she smiled and then she laughed.

Then she said to father, “This is too delicious,” and father read it and smiled too, but we didn't, because there wasn't anything to smile at. Then mother told us we might ask Tony to tea.

Then mother went out of the room and I went too, and I asked her why she smiled, and she said only because Miss Wilhelmina

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didn't know what to do with Tony because he asked such funny questions, and she wanted to know if mother would have Tony here as often as she could, just till Miss Wilhelmina got accustomed to him, I suppose.

Mother said, “ You see, darling, I am like the old woman who lived in a shoe ; I have so many children I don't know what to do, so Miss Wilhelmina thinks one more won't make any difference.”

I said, “ You are funny, mother ; ” and so she is. And I said, “ What sort of questions does Tony ask ? ” and mother said she didn't know. I wished she did, but she didn't. So I went back to the schoolroom, and they all wanted to know what mother had told me, but I didn't tell them because it was a secret. Then we all wanted to write to Tony. I wanted to write, but the



others said a girl can't write to a boy, but I think she can if she likes. But Pat said it wasn't a good plan, so I didn't. Then Mark wanted to write, but Pat said he would because he was older than Mark, and so he is.

Then he wanted to cut his finger and write with his blood like some one did in a book once, but we wouldn't let him.

He said it was rot not to, because he expected Tony always did it in Australia. That's where Tony came from.

Then Pat hadn't got any note-paper; but I had. It was given to me on my birthday. It is blue, and it has a tea-pot on it, and “Come early” written under the tea-pot, so it's meant to ask people to tea on. I said I would lend Pat some, but he thought it was a girl's paper, and wouldn't have it just at first; but he did afterwards.

He didn't know what to say, so we told

him, and he wouldn't do it just at first, but he did afterwards, because he couldn't think of anything himself.

It was a very nice letter, and we gave it to the groom, and Chancellor turned round and round and went backwards, and wouldn't go at first, but then he did.

Billy said, “ I knew he wasn't so very tame, but I patted him all the same.” Billy was as proud as anything. He is a frightfully proud boy about things.

Then we wondered if Tony would write a letter, and he did after a little. Another groom brought that letter. He rode on a grey horse and it wouldn't eat sugar, and it wasn't very quiet, so the groom told us to mind, and we did.

Billy told him he had patted Chancellor. He showed the groom the marks Chancellor had made on the gravel when he pranced

about. Billy hates the carriage drive being spoilt. He is frightfully tidy.

Tony's letter was bright red.

I don't suppose people often get bright red letters.

It was a very funny letter, and he had drawn a thing like a train, inside at least there was smoke, and it was supposed to be a train because Tony said so.

He said he would be very pleased to come to tea and that he hadn't any tea-pot paper, so he had drawn an engine, and he said he thought he ought to say that Sarah's young man gave her the paper. But he needn't have told us that unless he liked. It wasn't much good, because we didn't know who Sarah was. But we didn't mind. It was a funny letter, and not so very well spelt.

But Tony had come such a long way that I don't suppose he had done many lessons.

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In summer we do from ten to twelve in the morning, and from two to four in the afternoon. And in winter we do from ten to twelve, with cake in between, in the morning, and from four to five in the afternoon, and then a little after tea.

But this is about summer, and the very same day that Tony came Madielle went away, but only for her holidays.

Tony came in the carriage, and we said, “How do you do ? ” and Tony said, “How do you do ? ” and then we didn’t say anything just for a little because there wasn’t anything to say.

Then Pat said “Well ! ”

And Tony said “Well,” and we all said “Well.”

Then Billy said—

“What time d’you go to bed ? ”

And Tony didn't know. It is rather funny not to know what time you go to bed. I thought people always knew that except grown-ups.

They can't so very well know because they don't always go to bed at the same time. We do, except at Christmas and birthdays, and some other days too. Then I asked him how long he did lessons, and he didn't know that either. Then Pat said, “I'll race you to that tree,” and Tony ran like anything. He can just run. Then we jumped and we did all sorts of things.

Then Biddy showed Tony the canary's tail, and he had never seen one except on a canary, so he was pleased. But he wasn't much good at pretending. He thought it was telling lies, but he didn't know.

He said he rode ponies in Australia and not elephants.

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And when we told him he must say elephants, he said he couldn't when they were ponies.

So I said, " You aren't much good, Tony ; but it doesn't matter, just say elephants." So he did.

Then we went on with our game.

Tony was supposed to be a great Prince, and when we asked him what his elephants were covered with, he said, " Hair," and I said—

" You are thinking of ponies again, Tony. You must remember it's elephants ; just shut your eyes and say elephants. It's quite easy ; and you should say they were covered with pearls and rubies and gold trappings and precious stones."

" Well, so they were," Tony said ; " only it's lies."

Then I told Tony it wasn't really ; it was pretending.

Then Biddy said : “ And did your most wonderful and surprising Highness kill many tigers ?

“ Here the jungle abounds with wild beasts,” and Biddy pointed to the geranium bed, which was rather good, I think, and very like a real book.

Tony said, “ There weren't any tigers ; and it's bush, not jungle.”

It was only pretending, but Tony wasn't any good, so we didn't pretend any more.

He didn't know what a Beast Club was, but we made him a member.

Pat says you can be a member of a thing without understanding so very much.

The Beast Club is a club of our own, at least a little boy we know allowed us to have one. It's his invention, really,

and you have to be an insect or a beast, and, whatever you are, you must give it to the club.

I was a bee, and I gave one to the club, and while I was presenting it—Pat says presenting is the proper word—it nearly stung, anyhow it would have liked to, but it didn't quite.

Then Tony said he would be a kangaroo.

But Pat said he must be something that he could get, and he couldn't get a kangaroo, because there aren't any.

And still Tony said a kangaroo, and Pat said, “But you can't get a kangaroo, Tony.”

Then Tony said, “Well, we can pretend.”

And I said, “But this is a real game, Tony, and not pretending,” and Tony said, “But we can pretend it's pretending, and I'll be a kangaroo.”

So it wasn't any use, and Tony wouldn't be anything except a kangaroo, so we let him.

Tony's hair is as straight as anything.

Then we had a meeting, and Pat made a speech and said that Tony was to be a member and that he had brought a wonderful beast to the Club, and that he should be made a very important member of the Beast Club, and Billy said he would make a speech too, and he said—

“I heart—heart—ily approve of my brother's indigestion.”

He didn't mean that exactly, at least I don't suppose he did, but mother says people often say things in speeches they don't quite mean, so it didn't matter.

Another thing is that Billy always stammers a little when he makes a speech, lots



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of people do that too, mother says, so it didn't so very much matter.

So Tony was a proper member, and we thought after tea we might go and pretend to find a kangaroo in the woods—we have woods of our very own. They are very pretty, and sometimes there are primroses there, and we pick lots. Biddy picked twenty-three bunches one day, and when she told mother she had picked twenty-three bunches, Billy said, "Don't exaggerate, darlin', you know you picked thirty." Thirty is more than twenty-three, so she didn't exaggerate, but Billy thought she did, and he often corrects wrong.

Then we had tea, and Tony liked that.

Once we had a little boy to tea, not Tony but another little boy, and mother asked him what he would like to do, and he said—

"Eating amuses me most."

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Tony liked having tea very much, but he didn't know you must always begin with bread and butter, and then have cakes or jam, and then bread and butter again, unless there are hot cakes.

Then if there are hot cakes you must eat them first, because if you didn't they would get cold.

We have hot cakes sometimes, but not always.

Tony longed to have white mice, but he didn't suppose Mr. Beaufort would be rich enough to buy them. I expect he would.

After tea I asked Tony why he asked Miss Wilhelmina funny questions, and he said he didn't. Then I said Miss Wilhelmina said he did, so Tony said he thought it was about his trousers.

He doesn't wear proper trousers like Pat

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wears on Sundays, only sailor trousers. But Tony didn't like them so very much at first, so when he met the footman in the hall, one of the very big footmen I think it was, he said—

“ ‘Enery, are *your* trousers comfortable ? ” and Miss Wilhelmina said he oughtn't to have asked that, and Tony doesn't know why.

I think Miss Wilhelmina didn't like Tony saying “ ‘Enery ” when it's Henry ; but Tony says it *is* “ ‘Enery,” because Scott says “ ‘Enery,” and she must know because she is a housemaid.

Tony doesn't much understand about names, because mother says the first day he came to Beaufort he asked Miss Wilhelmina if she was a boy or a girl.

That's because her name was Wilhelmina. He says Willie is a boy's name. I

think the Helmina makes it not a boy's, at least I think it does.

So Tony isn't much good at names. There are lots of things he doesn't understand.

He says he likes talking to Sarah best. She is the one who gave him the red note-paper. He says Sarah says the ink ought to be white ; but he told her it couldn't be, because ink is black ; and so it is, and it is red too, sometimes. Sarah is one of the servants at Beaufort ; but he says you have to get up ever so early to see her, or else you don't see her at all, because she is on the staircase very early, and then is never anywhere else all the rest of the day. I expect she is, only Tony doesn't know. He likes Sarah. I don't know, but I think she must be nice from what Tony says.

Tony asked Miss Wilhelmina if she didn't



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think Sarah had lovely hair ; and Miss Wilhelmina didn't know who Sarah was, and Tony said he would show her ; but she didn't want so very much to see Sarah, and she didn't want to know about Sarah's young man.

Our mother knows all our servants ; and sometimes she asks if their fathers are quite well, and if their mothers are quite well. And sometimes they aren't, then mother is sorry. But Miss Wilhelmina doesn't ask those sort of things.

Tony said he wouldn't mind if he came to tea every day. So he did for ever so long.

III

THE next day when Tony came mother said we ought just to show him things, so we did.

I showed him the secret place where Mark and I sit.

It is on the top of a wall, and the others don't know; but Tony said he wouldn't tell, and he didn't—at least not for a long time, and then I let him.

Tony liked the pigs and the ponies, but he didn't care for the rabbits so very much.

We told him Aunt Susan thought we weren't kind to them, because they looked unhappy; and she said happy animals always had stand-up ears, when they were lop-eared rabbits all the time. Tony thought she must be rather silly. 'But I don't think she is so very silly, only old. She is father's aunt, and not ours; so she must be pretty old, I should think.'

We have three ponies now, a brown one, a grey one, and a black one. The black one isn't really black. He looks black but

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he isn't quite black. He doesn't go very fast, but the brown one does. He rears and kicks and runs away sometimes, but sometimes he is good. He always wants to go where *he* wants to go and we don't.

Madielle says he is just like some children she knows.

The grey pony is quite quiet, and when you touch him with the whip he stands quite still and shakes himself like anything.

When Tony saw the birds' cemetery he wanted us to have a funeral, but we couldn't, because there wasn't a dead bird.

Billy said if only there was one in the currant bushes, but there wasn't, and I was very glad and so was Biddy.

Billy always says if only there were things when there aren't.

Tony was very funny when he first came ; he didn't know what church was.

He asked Scott, and she told him he didn't ought to ask such a question because people would think he was a heathen.

So he was afraid to ask, and he didn't know what it was till he got there.

I told him he couldn't be a heathen because he wore clothes and wasn't black. But he didn't know ; he thought he was being one all the time without knowing it, till I told him he wasn't.

He asks us now when he doesn't know things, and sometimes we know and sometimes we don't. We generally know when it's about things like heathens. I suppose every one knows that except Tony, and, of course, Scott didn't.

Then Tony thought the clergyman was in his nightdress.

When we asked him if he didn't say his prayers, he said, “ Oh yes, of course, before

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breakfast and dinner and tea, but not before a ‘little something’ at eleven.”

That’s what Scott calls it. We don’t; we call it cake and milk.

Then when we told him that was grace, he didn’t know what was the difference, so we told him.

In grace you thank God for giving you good food, and in prayers you thank God for other things and pray for things you want very much.

Tony never prayed when he lost things like we did.

He said God didn’t cook the food, and that we ought to thank the cook too.

So mother told him a whole lot of things, just like she tells us, and he knows now.

Tony thought they ought to say a side-board grace at Beaufort, because there

are such heaps and heaps of things on the sideboard, but they don't.

Tony wished he had a mother of his very own. He wanted it worse than white mice, much.

And our mother said, “Darling, don't say that; I can't bear it”—and still Tony did. Then mother knelt down on the floor, just as she does when we are sorry, and she held out her arms, and she loved Tony till he felt much better, just like we do.

He doesn't think people kiss so very much in a grand house like Beaufort; and I don't suppose they do.

He saw Scott kiss somebody, only he wouldn't tell us who it was, because Miss Wilhelmina said he mustn't ever say such things again. So Tony doesn't look now when he sees things.

Then I must tell you some things about our village, as this is a real story.

There's a church. Our pew has red cushions, and a red curtain behind, and two high footstools which we take in turns ; all the rest are small. Then there's a clergyman, and he is very nice ; and there's a curate.

The curate is called Mr. Black, and he is the one who would give five pounds to whistle like Mark, but he can't.

Then there are two shops, besides the post office.

Sometimes you can buy a stamp at the post office, and sometimes you can't. Once when we went to buy a stamp—it was when mother was in Scotland—Mrs. Bowles could only find *half a one*, and she gave us the half, and she said she would send up the other half if she could find it.

Then there is a blacksmith, which we like, and a carpenter, and a man who makes wheels, and they are painted red.

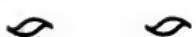
Then there is an idiot in our village. He doesn't do anything. He only smiles ; and we smile back, because mother says we must be kind towards him, and then we run away like anything.

Then there is a very old man in our village. He is very old and nearly blind, and Biddy and I go and see him, and we thought it would be nice if we sang hymns to him, so we did.

And when we had done he said he liked us to come and see him, but he didn't much like that noise. So we didn't sing any more.

We don't think it was very good manners, but Biddy made him a comforter all the same.

It was grey, with red stripes.



IV

SOON after Tony came Cousin Cynthia came to stay. She is very grand and quite grown up, and she wears gloves in the garden sometimes. Mother got the letter at breakfast to say she was coming and she wanted to bring her maid, and father thought perhaps she better, but mother said it would do her good to do her own hair. I don't know why, but mother said so.

Anyhow, Cynthia was coming and father and mother were going to be away just when she came, but only for the day, so we asked if we might go and meet her.

We begged ever so hard and they said yes, after we begged and begged, so we did.

But Cynthia didn't much like it, not like we did. It was fun. We have a sort of waggon which is very nice. It just has wooden seats, which you can take out, and

it hasn't got cushions. So it is rather hard to sit on, but when it gets very hard we stand up and then we get better. Jack tumbled off the box one day and broke his arm, at least he nearly broke it. It was in a sling, so it was just as good.

When father and mother were gone we made a plan.

Jack drives just like a real coachman, and he said we should drive tandem to meet Cynthia, and we did.

The grey pony went in first and then the brown in front.

We hadn't got proper harness for tandem, so the boys made it out of rope. It was awfully good and just like real harness. Then we started. We forgot there wouldn't be so very much room for Cynthia. Well, we started, and it was fun. It was very hot, and the grey pony sat down and wouldn't

∞ ∞ “Things we Thought of”

go on. We said “Go on.” Then it did at last.

They didn’t go very well, but it wasn’t Jack’s fault; he drove all right: it was the ponies’ fault.

Then when we were passing Mr. Hardy’s shop he ran out and stopped us, and the ponies stopped; they always do at Mr. Hardy’s shop; and Mr. Hardy said he had a small kitchen table for us which Mrs. West—that’s our cook—wanted very particular, so he thought as we were passing we could take it. Jack didn’t quite know what to do.

It did seem a pity not to take the table as we were there.

Cynthia was the worst of it, but we couldn’t say no, at least not so very well, because Jack says tables don’t take up much room because you can sit on the top

"Things we Thought of"



and underneath, so there's really more room than if there wasn't a table.

And so there is. Jack was quite right. We took out the two wooden seats at the sides and put them on the floor of the cart, and then we put in the table and it was all right.

I sat under the table with Tony and Biddy and it was a squash, and Pat and Mark sat on the top of the table, and Jack drove just the same as before. It was jolly.

We meant Cynthia to sit on the top, because she was too grown up to sit underneath, and we had to sit sort of lying down, which we didn't suppose she would like. Grown-ups don't like nice things like we do, and she is very grand. Her father has something to do with the royal family, but I don't know what.

We couldn't go very near to the station



"Things we Thought of"

because the brown pony doesn't like trains, so the tandem waited in the lane, and some of us went to meet Cynthia. We think Cynthia is a silly name. Anyhow, she looked frightfully swell and silly, all dressed up—and I didn't much like telling her about the tandem, so I told Pat, and he did.

Cynthia was rather pleased when she heard about it, and said "How grand!" but it wasn't very grand, of course, but she didn't know. Then she said about the luggage—and Pat said he was afraid there wasn't so very much room for luggage—and she said she hadn't much luggage; but she had—two huge boxes and a little box.

Then, when the train had quite gone, Pat went to tell Jack to come, and he did.

When Cynthia saw the tandem she got rather funny and red, and when the brown

pony turned round and the grey pony didn't—which they often do, just in fun—she looked rather frightened.

Then she didn't much like sitting on the table. She wanted a fly, but there wasn't a fly, so she couldn't have one—at least not very well when there wasn't one; then she wanted to walk, but when we said it was four miles, she just got on the table and said nothing.

It was much worse for us squashed underneath, and it wasn't so extra nice for Mark standing on the step.

The grey pony didn't sit down once going home. They don't do things so very often going home, because they want to get home, I suppose, so they haven't time to think of things.

Nothing happened except we passed Mr. Seymour, which Cynthia didn't like.

— — — “Things we Thought of”

We didn't mind. He laughed like anything ; but Cynthia nearly cried.

I suppose she didn't like our tandem, because she's grand and something to do with the royal family.

Mr. Seymour wouldn't mind a tandem like ours, only he's got a lovely one of his own with proper harness.

Tony liked ours, and so did we.

Pat says Cynthia was jolly decent about her luggage, and so she was.

The grey pony had got into bad ways just then. He used to stop whenever you met any one, and sometimes you didn't want to, and still he did.

One day we met some one we didn't know. He was an old gentleman, and his horse was frisky, as frisky as anything, and when he was just passing us the grey pony stopped, and then he stopped too, because, I suppose,

he thought we wanted to speak to him, when we didn't, because we didn't know him. Nannie was driving, and she said “go on” to the pony, very loud, and the old gentleman said “What? I can't hear; speak up! What d'you say?”

And Nannie said, “I said, ‘Go on,’ sir, to the pony,” and the old gentleman said, “Can't hear a word, can't hear a word. D'you want anything? What did you say?” And Nannie said very loud, “I said ‘go on,’ sir, to the pony;” and the old gentleman got cross and red, and his horse danced about, and he said, “What d'you want?” in a very angry voice, and Nannie got angry too, which she isn't generally, and she said to us, “Do speak up, children, I can't make him hear, he's worse than the pony.”

But we couldn't speak up because of

the bulls' eyes that were in our mouths, but we did laugh, it's not very safe to with bulls' eyes in your mouths, but we did.

Then the old gentleman was very angry, and called Nannie, and Nannie got out and we took the reins, and Nannie went up to the old gentleman, and the old gentleman said, “What did you say? Speak up!” and Nannie just said as loud as ever she could, “I said ‘go on,’ sir,” and the old gentleman was very angry, and said Nannie was an impertinent woman, which she wasn't, and said she ought to be ashamed of such children, which she wasn't, and he said lots more things which we didn't quite hear, because when Nannie said “go on” in such a very loud voice the pony started off quite fast, and we couldn't stop him because we laughed so, but Nannie didn't because she

had to walk ever so far. And she didn't like the old gentleman for saying those things to her, which weren't a bit true, because she was only saying “go on” to the pony all the time.

It was the old gentleman's fault for being deaf.

It isn't a good plan to have a pony who always stops when you don't want him to. Mother thinks it was very funny about the old gentleman, but Nannie doesn't think it was funny at all.

The day after Cynthia came the pony did a worse thing.

Pat went out for a ride all by himself, and when he had got a little way he found a grand picnic going on. He wanted to go past them quite fast, but the grey pony stopped quite still, and poor Pat didn't know what to do, and the lady of the picnic

thought he was stopping on purpose, and she said—

“ Will you have a bun ? ” and Pat didn’t want to stop at all ; he wanted to go on all the time, and the pony wouldn’t.

The lady thought he was waiting for a bun, and he wasn’t.

Mother said Cynthia was lovely. She said whenever she looked at her she thought of some lovely flower. We didn’t. But she was good at pretending.

We liked Cynthia, but Mr. Seymour would come and pretend too, and he couldn’t, at least he wasn’t much use, but he was very nice.

Tony came every day in the holidays, and he got quite different. He was only grand once, and that was when he had a loose tooth.

He came down to us and said he was

going to London with Miss Wilhelmina, and when we asked why, he said he was going to have his tooth out, which wasn't so very grand after all.

Our garden boy had some out which weren't so very loose, so he ought to have been grander than Tony, really, [because you get a shilling for a tight tooth, but Tony wanted to go to London, I suppose.

When we told him he would miss the picnic, which was going to be the jolliest picnic we have ever had, he didn't want to go.

Then Pat said he would look at the tooth, and when he did he said, “What rot ! I'll soon take that out.”

At first Tony didn't quite like the thought of Pat doing it, and then he did. He didn't know how Pat was going to do it. Pat told him it was easy, and so it is if you stand

still. But you can't always. It happens like this—

You tie a bit of cotton round the tooth, and then some one opens the door and you stand, and then they tie the cotton to the door-handle and then you stand quite still, and some one shuts the door and it's done. It is quite easy, really. But Tony didn't know about that.

There are lots of things he doesn't know about.

He thought we didn't know about kangaroos having their little ones in their pocket, but we did.

That's because Tony lived in Australia ; but we have been to the Zoo, which is just as good, only better, because it's nearer.

Well, Tony went into the schoolroom, and we all went too, and Pat tied a bit of cotton to Tony's tooth, and then he tied it to the

door-handle, and he told me to shut the door, but I didn't want to, so I didn't, and Mark said he would. Then Tony stood quite still.

He was frightfully brave.

Pat recited “The boy stood on the burning deck” in a loud voice all the time, so as to make Tony brave, and it did.

Then Mark shut the door, and it came out all right. Tony didn't quite like it just at first, but we said he was very brave, and he liked that, so we said it again till he was all right.

Then we looked at the tooth and Tony wanted to have a funeral, but our cemetery was for birds and animals, not for other things.

Tony wasn't quite pleased.

Then we said he could take it home to

Miss Wilhelmina, and he was pleased then, and we said he could bury it at Beaufort if he liked. Then we got a dear little pill-box and we put it inside, and he took it home—not then, but when he went home, which was ever so long after tea.

Mr. Seymour came to dinner that evening, and he sat next to Cynthia. We went in to dinner, but not to eat anything.

Billy told Mr. Seymour that he ought to marry Cynthia because they were as tall as each other, and she would be a good Christian wife. But I don't know if Cynthia is such a very good Christian ; she doesn't do such very good things. She doesn't sing hymns like Ellen does. Ellen is the nursery maid.

Cynthia got as red as anything.

I don't know why ; I suppose it was being called a Christian.

"Things we Thought of"



Mr. Seymour didn't mind, anyhow he laughed like anything.

Mother told Billy afterwards he mustn't say those sort of things.

And Billy says he supposes he better not talk at all then, because he doesn't know what things are those sort of things.

V

THE next day was the picnic. Cynthia began to get ready ever so early, but we didn't, because we never get ready for picnics, except wash our hands ; we do for parties, but not for picnics.

But Cynthia did. I was in her room, so I know.

Baby got ready for a party once, but she never went. It was mother's party, and



"Things we Thought of"

she thought Baby was too little to come down, but Nannie dressed her all ready, because she thought mother would send for her. Baby had on her best clothes and her blue shoes and everything. And Nannie wrapped her up in a shawl, so she shouldn't get cold or anything, and she waited and waited on the stairs, but nobody sent for her.

But I must go on telling about Cynthia.

First she put on a light blue hat. Then she put on a pink one, and then she didn't know which to wear ; and then she put on a white one, and I said it didn't matter, it was only a picnic.

We wore our garden hats, but Cynthia didn't ; she wore the white one.

Biddy has an elastic under her chin, but I don't.

I used to when I was quite little.

"Things we Thought of"

I don't do lots of things that I used to, but Biddy does.

Mr. Seymour came to fetch us in a big waggonette with two lovely horses, not tandem but the other way, and Mr. Seymour drove.

He asked Cynthia to sit on the seat beside him, but Cynthia said she thought some of the children would like to sit there, and they did.

So she didn't. She sat inside, and then she didn't look so pleased after all.

We took the dogs too. Nannie thought we better not, but we did, because they love picnics.

Tony came too ; he loves picnics too, and so do we all.

It was to be a lunch picnic and a tea picnic too.

Well, we drove ever so far, and we got to

a lovely place, and we all got out of the carriage, and the carriage went away, and Mr. Seymour told it not to come for ever so long, and Pat turned head over heels backwards into a gorse bush, which he didn't much like, and we jumped for joy and ran about.

Then we wanted to unpack the lunch, but Cynthia said we had better not. Then Mr. Seymour and Cynthia went to see something, a view, I think, and Billy went too, and we waited and waited, and we did all sorts of things, but still it wasn't time to unpack the lunch, and we were hungry.

So Pat said, “ Let's unpack the lunch for a surprise for them,” and we said “ let's,” and we did.

There were all sorts of things—cold chicken and ham, and a big pie and something else, and jam tarts and sponge cakes,

puddings and cake, and biscuits and butter and fruit and all sorts of things ; and we laid them all out on a tablecloth, and it looked lovely.

Still Mr. Seymour and Cynthia and Billy didn't come, so we said we must go and look for them, and we did.

It was hot, but we found them, and they weren't looking at the view ; but Mr. Seymour was looking at Billy, and Cynthia wasn't looking at anything. Then I told them lunch was ready, and they jumped up ; and Billy came with me, and Pat and the others stayed with Cynthia.

Then I asked Billy what he had been saying, and he said he told Mr. Seymour that Cynthia kept the little squashed flowers he gave her in her prayer-book, which we thought was rather silly, because they were dead and squashed, and squashed flowers

aren't much use, and Billy said he told them lots more things. Billy always knows things.

Mr. Seymour gave him half-a-crown, but I don't know why ; it wasn't his birthday or anything.

Then we got back to the place where the lunch was spread out, and a most awful calamity had happened.

The dogs had eaten nearly all the lunch. We forgot the dogs.

Madielle says once a famous man called Sir Isaac Newton was writing a frightfully clever book, and when he had just finished it he went out of the room, and while he was out of the room his little dog, Diamond, upset a candle and the book was all burnt !

And Sir Isaac Newton only said, “Diamond, Diamond, you little know what thou hast done,” which wasn't much to say

when such a frightful thing had happened. Madielle wanted us to write it in French, and so we did, but not very well.

Mr. Seymour laughed when he saw what had happened, but I don't think there was anything to laugh at, because the chicken and ham were nearly gone, and the big pie was begun to be eaten and it was licked all over, which is worse than being eaten, much worse, and everything was gone except the jam tarts and the fruit and the butter, which wasn't much use all by itself.

But afterwards we were glad the dogs had done it, because we pretended we were besieged, and Mr. Seymour divided up the food, and the women—that was Cynthia, Biddy, and me—got most, just like women do in a real siege. At all events Mr. Seymour says they ought to, but Pat says they oughtn't, because they don't do such hard

∞ ∞ "Things we Thought of"

work, but he let us this time because it was pretending to be a siege, and we didn't really eat most because we gave back lots.

So it was a jolly picnic after all. We didn't whip the dogs because we expect they thought it was a picnic all for themselves, because it was laid out and left alone. Biddy says they ought to have known by the knives and forks and spoons that it wasn't for them ; but I don't suppose they could think of that.

It wouldn't have been fair to whip them, and we didn't say—

“ Dogs, dogs, you little know what you have done ! ” because they did know, and they liked it very much.

Madielle says it is no use saying you are sorry about something if you are glad you did it all the time. Mother says you must always say what's true, even if you don't

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think it's true, you must say it if it is. At least I think that's what she said. She says lots and lots of things.

After we had finished all the things except the butter, which wasn't any good all by itself, Mr. Seymour told us to see who could run to the top of the hill first.

He said the one who got there first was to have half-a-crown. Then Billy said he couldn't run, so he should stay with Mr. Seymour, and then Mr. Seymour said the one who was last should have a shilling, and we must all be scouts and stay there some time and see if we could see the enemy ; and we said, What was Cynthia going to do ? and he said she must stay with the general. He was the general. I think it's a good plan to be a general when it's so very hot.

So we went.

❖ ❖ “*Things we Thought of*”

It was hot. Pat got there first because he runs the fastest, much.

Tony and Billy were both last. Then we pretended to see the enemy, so we ran down as fast as we could, and Mr. Seymour and Cynthia were talking, and Mr. Seymour said we didn't stay long enough. But you can't stay long when you see the enemy.

No good soldiers would.

We didn't run away ; we only went to tell the general.

Then the rest of the time till tea we just did different things. Some of us fished in a pond which was near, but we didn't catch anything.

Then we had tea. We watched the tea, so the dogs didn't eat it. I don't expect they were very hungry, because of the lunch.

Mr. Seymour made the fire, and Cynthia

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filled the kettle and he did too. It was fun.

Then we went home.

After dinner, when we were in bed, mother came to see us as she generally does, and she told me Mr. Seymour was very happy because he was going to marry Cynthia. And I asked if it was because of what Billy said, and mother said no, it was quite his own idea.

Then she said one thing why he liked Cynthia was because he thought there weren't many girls who would sit on a kitchen table and drive through a village.

But Cynthia had to; she couldn't help it, so I don't think it was so extra wonderful.

We liked Mr. Seymour.

After that we called him Gerald, and so did Cynthia, but not just at first.

Tony says he won't ever get married,



and so won't any of us—at least I don't expect so.

Billy says if he does marry, he must marry Dolly—that's our cousin—and mother says he'd better marry some one else, and Billy says he couldn't marry a stranger, because she mightn't be kind to his children, and so she mightn't.

VI

CYNTHIA wasn't much good after that. Then she went away. Mother says she went home to ask her father about Gerald. I asked mother if he would mind about Cynthia, and mother said he wouldn't. I suppose that is because Gerald is so nice.

We weren't allowed to drive Cynthia to the station because Gerald wanted to.

We promised not to have a kitchen

table, because there wasn't one to have, and still she wouldn't come, and mother said to father, "How happy those children are," and they weren't children. Gerald is ever so much older than Cynthia, and Cynthia is quite grown up, so I don't see how they could be children. But mother said "children," and father looked funny. He always nearly cries when he's happy. We don't.

Tony thinks black people are black all over, but Biddy doesn't, and I don't, because we've been to the nigger minstrels in London, and we saw up their sleeves, and it was white; but their faces were black, and so were their hands, but not the rest.

Pat says they aren't real black men, but we think they are; anyhow they looked like real black men.



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The boys black their faces sometimes and their hands, and they do niggers, but they don't look so very like black men, because we know they're the boys. Baby always cries when they do it, and Nannie takes her away.

We didn't go to Beaufort often before Tony came. We did sometimes, but not often, because there were no children there, but one day we went, and the floors were so slippery that Pat fell down twice.

There is a picture-gallery there, ever so long, and we wanted to play cricket there, but we weren't allowed to. Mother thinks the pictures are so lovely. We don't—at least not extra lovely.

Jack can draw horses like anything. Soon after Cynthia went away Miss Wilhelmina wrote and said Tony had been to us so often and was so happy, but we must go to



Beaufort and see him; and so we did, because we wanted to.

At Beaufort you have lemonade and ginger beer directly you are thirsty. Just as soon as ever you are thirsty you get it, so we often have it. Pat says he is thirstier at Beaufort than he is any other time in his life, and so are we all.

We just tore about and did all sorts of things, and we went to the stables, and there were more than thirty horses, and heaps and heaps of carriages. Billy wanted just to sit in the 'bus, and so we did for a little, but not for long.

Billy wanted to stay there all the time, but we didn't.

Then we saw the deer, only they wouldn't come near, and we wished they would.

Then we had lunch.

There were lots of grown-ups staying at

Beaufort. Some of them we didn't much like ; so we had lunch at another table, which was much nicer.

It was a big table, and we had just the same things to eat.

One grown-up man wanted to sit at our table, but we wouldn't let him because he was silly, and he pretended to cry and it wasn't a bit funny, and we didn't much like him, so he didn't come.

Then I forgot to say we saw a picture in the picture-gallery of Mr. Beaufort's brother, who was Tony's very own father.

When Miss Wilhelmina told Tony it was Mr. Beaufort's brother Tony said he didn't think it was, and Miss Wilhelmina said it was, and still Tony didn't think it was, and Miss Wilhelmina said, “ Why ? ” And Tony said, “ Because brothers are boys.” That's because he was thinking of our boys. He

doesn't understand lots of things, and then we told him Pat and Billy would still be brothers when they were grown up ; and Tony said perhaps they would be dead by then, but I hope they won't, and so does Tony.

The day we went to Beaufort one of our chickens died, and at lunch we had chicken ; and Billy said in a loud voice, “ I wonder what this poor chicken died of ? ” And Miss Wilhelmina said he mustn't say that ; but the others laughed. But Biddy cried because it reminded her of her chicken, so we didn't eat any, but we did other things —lots.

Then there was one old lady there who was often asleep when she said she wasn't, so Pat thought of rather a good thing.

Just before lunch, while we were just



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doing nothing except getting cool, like we always do when we're hot, the footmen came out with lots of chairs and put them under the trees ; and Tony said it was for the ladies and gentlemen to sit there after lunch.

They always did, Tony said, which we thought wasn't much fun ; and then Tony told us about the old lady who was always asleep. So Pat thought of something which he told Tony, and Tony jumped for joy, and he showed Pat which chair the old lady sat on, and then Tony and Pat ran off and they came back with a lot of string and a bell, just like the bell Mrs. Bowles has on her shop door, which rings when you go in, to let her know you're there, and sometimes she doesn't come, so you just shake the door ever so hard, and the bell rings, and then she comes.

We were excited, and then Pat told us it was his own invention ; it just flashed into his head how to surprise the old lady, and his plan was to tie the bell under her chair. Then put the string along the ground behind the chair, and then take the string behind a tree, when Pat could pull it just when he wanted to.

Then we said, Supposing she moved the chair ? But Tony said she never moved chairs.

She was a very grand old lady.

Then Pat tied the bell on to a bar which went across the chair underneath, and the string was tied to it, and then he pulled the string along the ground and took it behind a tree ; and it was lovely.

That was before lunch, so when Biddy cried about being reminded of her chicken, we told her about the bell to make up, and

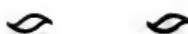
— — — “Things we Thought of”

it made her quite happy. She did laugh, and so did we all.

Then after lunch they all went out, and we sat and watched. And a most awful thing nearly happened ; the old lady was just going to sit down in the wrong chair, and a “smiley” man said, “Won’t you have this chair, Lady Theodosia ?” And she did, so it was all right ; the awful thing didn’t happen, but we thought it was going to.

Then she sat down, and nothing happened. Pat went behind the tree, and when we coughed very loud he was to ring the bell.

Then Pat said if we coughed we should wake the old lady, and so we should, so we said when we made signs he was to ring the bell. But it didn’t happen for ever so long. First they had coffee. But we didn’t. We don’t see why grown-ups have coffee after lunch when they have it for breakfast. I



think grown-ups have an awful lot to eat, and Tony thinks so too, and all the others do too ; but they don't eat jolly things like we do.

Then we were sitting just watching ; we weren't doing anything except just watching the old lady. And she said—

“ What's the matter with those children ? They make me feel quite nervous.” And Miss Wilhelmina said, “ Run away and play.”

But Tony shook his head. And the old lady said, “ For goodness' sake look at some one else, then. I can't stand four solemn little owls looking at me,” which we don't think was very good manners—at least not if she was such a very grand person. So we looked at the other people for a little, and then we looked to see if the old lady was asleep, and she wasn't. We wished she was,

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because we wanted to play, but she didn’t—not for ever so long. And Pat kept bobbing out behind the tree, and he didn’t much like staying there all by himself.

Mr. Beaufort talked and talked to the old lady when she wanted to go to sleep all the time.

Then he stopped talking and the old lady went to sleep, and when she was quite asleep Tony waved his handkerchief and there was a splendid noise.

It did ring well, and the old lady jumped up and said she wasn’t asleep and what was it, and they all looked.

Pat wasn’t so very brave, because when he heard the bell he ran away. Then Mr. Beaufort looked very angry and said, “Anthony,” and Tony said, “Yes,” and Mr. Beaufort said, “Come here,” and Tony went, but very regrettingly. Then Mr.

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Beaufort said, “Did you do this?” and Tony was going to say “yes,” but then he didn’t know what to say because he didn’t like to say it was his invention when it was Pat’s invention, and it wouldn’t have been fair because it was such a very good invention. Then Mr. Beaufort said—

“Now, Anthony, speak the truth,” and Tony didn’t say anything because he didn’t know what to say when he couldn’t take away Pat’s invention. So he said nothing, like the martyrs in the books.

Then Mr. Beaufort hardened his heart because he thought Tony was afraid when he was really only brave, so I said, and we all said, we had all done it, but it was Pat’s invention, and Tony only didn’t say he did it because he couldn’t take away Pat’s invention.

Then Mr. Beaufort said, “You seem to

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think it is something to be proud of, instead of being ashamed of yourselves,” and he said—

“ Go to your room, sir,” to Tony, and Tony went and we went too, but not with Tony, but just away by ourselves. Biddy cried because of her chicken, she said, but it was because of Tony, I think, and we cried a little too because of Tony, and we prayed that Mr. Beaufort’s heart might be softened.

Then after a little we went round to the other side of the house, and we were looking for Tony’s window when we saw him leaning out, and he had a long sort of rope which he let down slowly, and tied on to the end was a note, and we opened it. It was for Pat, but we didn’t know. Tony just wrote to say that he didn’t try to take away Pat’s invention which was so splendid, that was why he didn’t say he did it. He was the

guilty one because he said the old lady went to sleep. And he said suggesting things was worse than doing things.

Then Pat came and we gave him the note, and he wrote back and told Tony he didn't run away because he was afraid, but only because the bell made such an awful noise, and he said Tony was a brick, and so he was.

Then Tony pulled up the letter, but he couldn't read it very well, but we read it to him afterwards—not that day, but afterwards when he came to us. But he wasn't allowed to come for a few days.

Then Pat discovered that Tony's rope was made of a towel cut up, and when we saw Tony afterwards we asked him, and he said it was. Then we said he might have used string, and he said prisoners never did. They always used sheets or towels, and so they do. But I don't expect it was a good

plan for Tony to use a towel when he wasn't a real prisoner, but it was a good idea.

We thought Lady Theodosia was a horrid old thing, but she wasn't really; only mother said she had a weak heart, and she was so surprised when the bell rang.

Mother wasn't very pleased with us. She came to fetch us after tea, but we didn't have any tea because Tony didn't have any, so we didn't either, because we didn't think it was fair. Miss Wilhelmina wanted Tony to come down, but Mr. Beaufort said he must learn to behave like a gentleman first.

So after that Pat walked home, and he was quite right, because if Tony wasn't a gentleman he wasn't one either, and none of us were. When mother came she was very sorry and said she was ashamed of her children, and she was more ashamed afterwards because she brought Baby with her,

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and when they were sitting under the trees the man we didn't much like said to Baby, “ Will you sit on my knee ? ” and Baby said, “ If my mother will come too.”

But mother didn't. She wished she hadn't brought Baby, at least I expect she did.

It wasn't such a very happy day, but we did laugh when the bell rang. We think it was a very good invention all the same, even if it was naughty.

I don't suppose inventions can always be good things.

VII

TONY has never been to the British Museum. We have, only it was shut. After what we did at Beaufort that day Tony wasn't allowed to come for ever so long. But

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after ever so many days he came, and when he came he asked us if we had done any funny things and we said we hadn't. Then he was glad.

He doesn't like us to do funny things if he isn't there, only we can't help it sometimes.

Then we asked him if Mr. Beaufort was still cross, and Tony said he supposed he was, anyhow he looked cross. So we said we would pray every day that Mr. Beaufort's heart might be softened, but we didn't pray that Miss Wilhelmina's heart might be softened because it was already. Tony said she wasn't cross.

Mother says people sometimes look cross when they aren't cross. It's just their faces look cross.

Billy says, “Then they should smile all the time and then they wouldn't look cross.” But we don't suppose they could all the time,

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but Billy says they could, unless they were crying, then if they were crying they could stop smiling.

We don't think it was kind of Mr. Beaufort to be cross to Tony when Tony couldn't help being naughty, because we made him.

He was never naughty before he knew us. He said there weren't many things to be naughty about, at least not nice things.

Then mother went to Scotland.

We didn't like mother going away, but we did do some jolly things while she was gone.

We just forgot sometimes to be good. Billy says there wasn't time to be good, and there wasn't. There were such a lot of other things to do.

We promised mother to be good, only we didn't promise her not to think of things,



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and when you think of very good naughty things you can't help doing them.

Pat says that's called genius when you can't help doing funny things. A man came to stay with us once, and when he upset things, and did everything wrong, and put on Billy's hat without knowing it, mother said it was because he was a genius.

So I don't think a genius is so clever after all. Pat says they aren't supposed to be clever, at least he doesn't think they are, but they are supposed to be lots of other things.

Mother took Baby to Scotland because she said Baby's legs were weak, but I don't think they were. At all events they didn't look weak.

Then Billy said his legs were weak, and he tumbled down and he said he couldn't walk, because he thought mother would take him

to Scotland. But she didn't. She just said she would send for the doctor, and she said Billy must eat lots and lots and lots of porridge, which Billy doesn't so very much like, so he got quite well and mother didn't send for the doctor.

Baby went to Scotland all the same.

So Nannie went too, and father went away, and we drove him to the station for a treat, at least the boys did.

He could have gone with mother, only the boys begged ever so hard to drive him in the donkey-cart, because it was their own.

So they did.

Well, the donkey didn't go very well. He generally doesn't go very well, and this time he sat down, and father said there wasn't time for sitting down ; he must get up, but still he wouldn't.

Then he did, but then he stood still,

“*Things we Thought of*”

which takes just as long as sitting down, and father said he would miss the train.

Then when father got very angry the donkey went on, and just as he was going all right he fell down, and father and Pat and Mark all fell out on the road, and father's portmanteau too, and it burst open and some of the things came out, and an old lady passed and told father it was cruelty to animals and that he ought to be ashamed of himself, and then she went on and the donkey went on too. But for the rest of the way father pushed the cart so as to make the donkey go, and father said he would never give the boys a treat again. And he said lots of things about the donkey which we don't think was fair, because Biddy thinks donkeys are meant to sit down, because they always do.

But father caught the train after all, only

he had to get in the wrong side because it was just going, and he hadn't time to cross over ; and he left his portmanteau behind, so the boys brought it home again, which Ellen said they oughtn't to have done, because he wanted it and it ought to have gone by the next train.

But it didn't.

The boys told us about it when they came back, and they laughed like anything, only they said father didn't. We didn't do anything just the first day, we just went about and we told Ellen we had thought of things to do, just to frighten her, when we hadn't. Then a very exciting thing happened—a telegram came. And on the envelope it just said Randal, so we didn't know who it was for because Jack's name is Randal, and Pat's name is Randal, and Mark's name is Randal, and so is Billy's,



and so is Biddy's, and so is mine, and so is Baby's. But Baby was in Scotland, so she couldn't open it, and we all wanted to. But Jack said he must because he was the eldest, and so he did. It was for father or mother really, because it said: “Can you have Ralph and Tom for a week or ten days?”

We jumped for joy because they are our favourite cousins, and Jack said “rather,” and we all said “rather,” and we said what fun we shall have, but Ellen cried when she heard it, and she said she would rather see herself in her grave than have those boys. That's because she thinks they are so naughty. But Pat is worse, only he doesn't mean to be.

But Jack told Ellen they were very nice boys, and they must come because their father wanted them to. So Jack wrote the



telegram, and he said, “We accept your kind offer with pleasure.”

Jack said he knew that was all right, because father sent a telegram like that once.

Then we talked of what the boys would do, and Jack and Pat said they didn’t suppose Ralph and Tom would play with girls, so we needn’t think they would.

And Billy said he didn’t suppose they would. Then Jack said, “Well, you don’t suppose they would play with you ?” And Billy said they would if he let them, and Jack just laughed, and said they were a jolly sight too grand for that, when Ralph could bowl left hand.

Then Billy was very cross, but Biddy and I comforted him, at least we tried to, but he wouldn’t let us.

But Jack was only in fun ; he didn’t

— — — “Things we Thought of”

mean to be unkind, and he let Billy clean his bicycle afterwards. Then Mark said Billy might clean his white mice if he liked, but Billy didn't want to, so he didn't.

He said he didn't want to clean everything in the whole world.

Then the boys came.

We waited for them for ever so long, and we thought they were never coming, but they did, and Jack and Pat said, “Come on,” and they went.

We ran after them but they wouldn't wait, and they wouldn't play with us just at first, because we were girls, I suppose ; so Biddy and I went for a walk all by ourselves. We didn't think the boys were very kind, but Biddy said she didn't want to play with bothering boys, they made such a noise, and so they do, only it's nice.

And she said she could think of lots of

things if she liked to pay them out, and then she said we could have secrets of our own, and so we could have, only we didn't, because after tea the boys said we might play with them. So we did, because they wanted us to.

We did have fun.

Nothing so very much happened the first day, except when we went to bed, and then it didn't till the middle of the night.

It was Ralph's plan, and it wasn't a very nice one.

We didn't know about it till we heard Ellen say, “What's the matter?” And then we didn't know, but the boys told us.

There is a dark sort of cupboard outside the boys' room.

It isn't a real cupboard ; it's worse than a cupboard.

❖ ❖ “Things we Thought of”

We don't look in it because we don't like it, but Ralph and Tom made a rule that all the boys should get up out of their beds in the night and go to the dark cupboard and open the door and say, “Ho, the bogey ! Ho, the bogey ! Ho, the bogey !” and then walk back to bed.

So the boys got up in turns in the dark, and they went to the cupboard and they opened the door, and they said, “Ho, the bogey !” three times, but they didn't walk back to bed, at least I don't suppose they did. I expect they ran like anything.

Then Billy did it, and he said, “Ho, the bogey !” so loud that Ellen came running out of her room, and she was so frightened that she frightened Billy much worse than he was before, and they both cried. So Billy went to her room because he was frightened, and Ellen said the boys ought

to be ashamed of themselves for frightening a baby like that, and Billy didn't say he wasn't a baby like he generally does. He didn't say anything.

Next morning we got up quite good, as usual, and we meant to be good because we had promised mother to be good, and so we were till Pat drove the pigs all that long way by themselves.

It happened like this—

We saw some pigs just doing nothing—a big pig and some little ones—and Ralph said Pat ought to drive pigs, because Pat was an Irish name, and Pats always drove pigs. So Pat said he would, and Ralph said he didn't suppose he could, and Pat said he could, and so he did. He drove them ever so far along the road—about three miles, Pat thinks it was—and it took ever so long.

He told us that afterwards.

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We didn't know it when we went to tea with Mrs. White.

She came down and asked us because she thought we would be sad without mother.

We forgot about Pat, and, just as we were having tea, Mr. White came in, and he said to Mrs. White, “Poor Wurzel has lost his pigs,” and Mrs. White said, “Poor Wurzel, what troubles he has!” and she upset the tea; and she said Wurzel would be upset, because he had lost his wife too.

And Mr. White said they were such nice pigs.

Then Mrs. White said, “There were ten little pigs,” and Billy said, “There were twelve”; and we all made faces at Billy, and we kicked him under the table.

Then Mrs. White said, “How do you know, Billy?”

And Billy said because he stroked them. Then Jack spluttered, and he pretended his tea was hot when it was quite cold.

He was laughing really, and so were we all. But Billy wasn't. We didn't afterwards, because Mrs. White said Wurzel thought there were thieves about, and he was going to tell the policeman to catch them. So we didn't say anything, only we wondered where Pat was.

When we got home Pat was there, and he was very tired, because he had gone such a long way, and the pigs wouldn't go, the little ones were the worst.

Then Pat told us he had put them into a nice field quite safe, and left them, and he came home, and he was hot.

Then we told him what Mrs. White said about thieves.

Pat didn't say anything, at least not



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much, because there wasn't anything to say.

Then when we had all gone to bed, Pat had a feeling that he couldn't go to sleep without being forgiven ; and there wasn't any one to forgive him, because I don't think Ellen could forgive so very well.

I don't suppose she is old enough. So Pat came and told us all, and then he said he must go and ask Mrs. White to forgive him.

Then Billy said he must go too, because he said about stroking the pigs. So they dressed very quietly—but they didn't dress properly—and they went to the Vicarage, which was very brave, because it was quite dark.

Then when they got to the Vicarage they didn't know what to do, because it was all dark, but they knew which was Mrs. White's bedroom. It's the biggest window, and it



has a sponge outside in the mornings, so we know it's hers.

Then Pat threw stones against the window—only little stones, not big ones, because big ones would break the window.

And he heard Mrs. White talking to Mr. White, and then Mr. White opened the window, and said, “Who's there?” and Pat said, “Me,” and Mr. White said, “Who's me?” and Pat said, “Me,” and Mr. White said, “I don't know who 'me' is,” and Billy said, “It's both of us.”

And Pat said, “We want to see Mrs. White on very important business.”

So Pat and Billy waited, and then Mrs. White came to the hall door, and she did look funny; but she is very nice, and she said—

“Pat and Billy! What's the matter? Is any one ill?”



"Things we Thought of"

And Pat said no; but he had been naughty, and he couldn't go to sleep without being forgiven, and I don't suppose he could very well, because mother always forgives us before we go to sleep.

Then Mrs. White said she thought it was being naughtier than anything to come out in the dark, and Pat said driving pigs was worse. But Mrs. White didn't understand. Then Billy said, "I didn't stroke them. I promise on my dying oath."

And still Mrs. White didn't know what they meant.

So Pat told her he had tried to go to sleep, but he couldn't, so he told her all about the pigs, and she said she was very surprised. And she asked Pat why he did it, and Pat said because his name was Pat. Pats always did. But Mrs. White didn't see why.

But she forgave him all the same. And she asked Pat where the pigs were.

And Pat told her about the field.

It was a very nice field, he said, and he said just where it was.

Then she said Pat and Billy must promise to try and be good, and they promised.

Pat said he was being quite good till he saw the pigs. They put bad thoughts into his heart. Then Mrs. White said they must remember there were always two voices speaking to them.

One good voice trying to make them do good things, and one bad voice trying to make them do bad things.

So they came home and they went to sleep, so did we all.

Pat says Mrs. White was jolly decent about the pigs. And so she was, because she sent some one to bring them back very early in

the morning, and Wurzel found them in their proper place. He thinks they are clever pigs, when they weren't clever at all.

Pat says they were very stupid, but Wurzel thinks they were clever because they came home all right.

But they weren't clever.

Then came Sunday.

Ralph called my Sunday hat a “rummy thing,” so I didn't sit next him in church like I promised.

I don't think it's polite to call nice hats rummy things when they aren't.

VIII

PAT and Mark wanted some money very badly just then. They wanted such a lot of things.

They wanted a cricket-bat and a fishing-

"Things we Thought of"



rod and a bicycle and some stilts, and a knife with lots of things in it, and lots more things.

And they hadn't so very much money except in the missionary-box, and that wasn't much use.

Mrs. White gives us the missionary-box, and she wants us to get it quite full, but I don't suppose we can.

The day after the day Pat drove the pigs, Miss Flowerdew came and asked us to go to tea with her, because she thought we would be sad without mother. Lots of people asked us to tea because they thought we would be sad without mother.

Miss Flowerdew doesn't live so very far off, but she is rather old, and she has a lovely garden.

She has a croquet set which isn't like ours. Billy can crawl through the hoops,



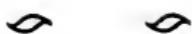
"Things we Thought of"

so I don't suppose it is a very good croquet set.

She can't walk so very much, because I suppose she is too old, so she told us to go in to the garden by ourselves and to be good children.

She told Pat if he picked up apples he should have a penny a dozen for them, and Mark said, "Me, too?" and Miss Flowerdew said, "All of you, dear children."

She must be a pretty rich old lady, because the boys picked up an awful lot of apples. But it wasn't quite fair. Ralph and Tom and Pat made a plan to shake the trees like anything by mistake, and then they said heaps and heaps of apples would come down on to the ground. I don't think it was fair, and Biddy didn't either, so we didn't do it, but the boys said, "She said picked-up apples, and they will be picked-up apples."



Then we said she didn't mean us to shake the trees, and the boys said they expected she did, because there were so few on the ground. Unless they shook the trees they couldn't buy a cricket-bat and a fishing-rod and stilts. So they shook the trees and then they picked up heaps and heaps of apples, and when we went in to tea Miss Flowerdew said, “Now, children, I must find my pennies. Where are the apples ? ”

And Pat said “Here ! ”

And Ralph said “Here ! ”

And Mark said “Here ! ” and there were heaps and heaps of apples in baskets, and Miss Flowerdew was very surprised and she said she didn't know there had been a storm.

And there hadn't been a storm.

It was the boys did it.

Anyhow, the boys got lots of money, and

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Miss Flowerdew didn't ask them to pick up any more apples.

There is a long grass walk down a very steep hill in Miss Flowerdew's garden, and it is jolly to run down. So we ran down it lots of times, and when we didn't want to run down any more Ralph said it would be jolly to roll things down it, but there wasn't anything to roll down.

Then Pat suddenly saw the garden roller, and a wicked thought came into his heart, and he said—

“Let's send the roller down,” and we all said, “Let's!” And we did. It was very heavy, but we did it all right ; and when we just got it to the top of the hill we let go, and it went down the hill ever so fast, and it went scrasch into a stream at the bottom of the grass walk, and we couldn't see it, because there were ferns

“Things we Thought of”



and rushes by the stream. So the roller was lost.

Mark thinks a roller must cost an awful lot of money because it's so heavy, and I expect it does.

Then we all looked at each other, but we didn't say much.

Then Pat said he thought we'd better go home. So we did.

But we thanked Miss Flowerdew first, and she said we had been very good children, when we had been very naughty.

But the roller did go jolly and fast. When we got home we thought it wasn't a good plan to go out to tea when mother was away, because we were always naughty.

First there was the pigs, then the apples, and then the roller.

And the roller was the worst.

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The pigs were found, but the roller was lost.

We didn't know what to do about being forgiven, because we didn't suppose Mrs. White would like if the boys went up again to be forgiven, because she had forgiven them once, and she mightn't want to forgive any more.

So we had to go to sleep without being forgiven, and it wasn't very nice.

The next morning we got a letter from mother, and she said she hoped we were being good children. She said Baby had been very good except the first day, and then she wasn't so very good because she was told not to eat any strawberries, and she went into the garden with lots of people, and when no one was looking she went into the strawberry beds, and she came back with her face all red with juice, and mother said,

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“Baby, I told you not to eat any strawberries.” And Baby said, “I didn’t.”

And mother said, “Baby!”

And every one said, “Oh!”

And then Baby said, “I only licked them.”

I should think licking was worse than eating, at least just as bad.

But Baby didn’t say what wasn’t true, because she hadn’t eaten them.

We think it was rather clever of Baby.

Then mother told us more things, only not about naughty things.

She said where she was staying the children were very good, and never made a noise. So I don’t suppose they were very nice children.

Then Pat told us what Mrs. White had told him and Billy about the two voices speaking to them, and he said the good voice

~ ~ ~ “*Things we Thought of*”

was telling him to go and tell Miss Flowerdew about the roller, and Billy said the bad voice was telling him not to, and he said—

“ I would rather listen to the bad voice to-day.”

So Billy wasn’t very good, but we thought Pat was right.

Besides, Ralph said the roller would get all rusty in the stream, and so it would.

So we all said we would go to Miss Flowerdew together, and Pat and Mark said they would take the apple money.

So we went.

We asked if Miss Flowerdew was at home, and she was, and we went in.

The butler looked rather surprised, because there was Ralph and Tom, and Pat and Mark, and Biddy and me.

I don’t suppose many people have six

children to see them all at once, and four dogs and three mice. Mark thought of taking the white mice so as to soften her heart if she was very angry.

She was lying on the sofa, and she asked us if we had wiped our boots, and we said, “Yes,” and then we said, “How do you do ? ”

Then Pat said to me, “ You say.”

And I said to Pat, “ You,” and then none of us said anything, and then Miss Flowerdew said, “ Well, children, what is it ? ” and we didn’t say anything.

Then she said, “ Don’t be shy,” and Pat got as red as anything, and he took the apple money out of his pocket, and he gave it to Miss Flowerdew, and he said—

“ We shook the trees.”

Then Miss Flowerdew said nothing. She only looked. Then she put all the money

“ *Things we Thought of* ”

back in her purse, and she put her purse in her pocket. Then she said, “ Thank you, Patrick. Good morning, children.”

But we didn’t go because of the roller, which was lost.

Then Pat said, “ There’s something worse.”

And Miss Flowerdew said, “ Well ? ” and we don’t think she was very kind only to say “ well.” We thought she ought to say something else. But she didn’t.

Then Pat said—

“ The roller’s in the stream.”

Then Miss Flowerdew sat up straight, and she said, “ What is in the stream ? ”

And Pat said, “ Your roller.”

And Miss Flowerdew said—

“ What stream ? ”

And Pat said, “ At the bottom of the grass walk.”

And Miss Flowerdew said—



“The roller is in the stream at the bottom of the grass walk?

“How clever of you to find it. I wonder how it got there.”

Then Pat said, “It wasn’t clever of us to find it, because we know it’s there, because we saw it go. We sent it down the hill on purpose, and it went like anything.”

Then Miss Flowerdew said, “You sent it down the hill on purpose?”

And Pat said, “Yes.”

Then Miss Flowerdew rang the bell, and the butler came and she told him it was to let us out, and we went and she never said anything. We like best when people say things when they’re angry. It’s much worse when they don’t say things.

Ralph said he saw her biting her lips like anything, that’s because she was angry I suppose.

Mark didn't show her his white mice after all, and I don't suppose white mice would have softened her heart, when it was so very hard. We didn't think she was very good at forgiving.

When Tony came down we told him all about it, and he said he didn't think he liked Miss Flowerdew. But he did wish he had seen the roller go down the hill, and he said—

“Did it go fast?” and we said, “Yes,” and Tony said, “It must have been jolly,” and then he said, “I wish you wouldn't do those sort of things when I'm not there. Will you wait for me next time?”

And then we told him we weren't going to do any more of these sort of things at all.

And Tony said, “Were we going to be frightfully good,” and we said, “Yes.”

And he said, “Can you think of frightfully good things?”

And we said we didn't know, but we supposed if we just did nothing it would be frightfully good. So it was.

I think we got out of bad ways that day. We were quite good for lots of days.

Then Ralph and Tom went away, and then mother came home.

Oh ! it was lovely.

Billy had a secret, and he said he must be in mother's room all by himself for ever so long, and he made Martha promise to let him, so she did.

When we went to the door he screamed that we mustn't come in, and we pretended we were, but we didn't.

Then after a long time Billy called out, “ You may come, you may come,” and we all went up, and Billy was there all covered with sticky stuff, and on the wall he had pasted large letters cut out in red paper, and



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the letters spelt "Wellcomb." He meant to put "welcome" but he put "wellcomb," and he nearly cried when we laughed and he said mother wouldn't mind. Martha said the wall was spoilt and she never knew Billy meant to do that.

We all wanted to go and meet mother, only we couldn't all of us go so none of us did. But we just waited and waited in the hall and then we ran upstairs to see if we could see the carriage coming, and we couldn't.

Then we decorated the hall, just like Christmas only not with holly, but with summer things, and we ran about for joy.

Then we heard the carriage wheels and they stopped, and we all waited in the hall because it wouldn't be fair to go outside, because we shouldn't all see mother at once.

And she came in all laughing, and she said,
“Oh ! my babies !

“Where shall I begin ? ” she meant about kissing, because there were such a lot of us, and she kissed us all at once. She knelt on the floor, and we hugged her like anything, and then we hugged Baby, and she said, “Tiresome children, you hurt.”

Then mother said, “And where’s Tony ? ” and Tony came and mother hugged him too.

It is nice when mothers come home and Nannies too.

Then Billy said, “*Do* come upstairs, oh ! do come ! ” and mother said, “Wait, Billy, I haven’t seen everybody,” and Billy said, “But there’s something glorious upstairs.”

Then Mark wanted mother to see his white mice, and we all wanted her to look at things ; and Billy danced all the time, and said, “Oh ! do come— it’s glorious.” And

mother went. Billy took her to her room, and she looked and looked, only not in the right place, and Billy said, “ Not there, not there.” And then mother looked, and she saw the “ Wellcomb,” and she said, “ Billy, what a beautiful idea ! ”

She was pleased, and so was Billy, and she didn’t say anything about it’s being spelt wrong.

Then after a little mother came down to the drawing-room, and she said, “ Now, children, what have you been doing ? Have you been good children ? ”

And we shook our heads.

And Billy said, “ Frightfully bad.”

And mother looked sad, and she said, “ Not really naughty I hope, children. You know what I mean by really naughty ? Being untruthful is worse than anything. My children haven’t been that ? ”

Then Billy got as red as anything, and said, “I didn’t stroke them. I said I did, because I said there were twelve when Mrs. White thought there were ten.”

And mother said, “Stroked what, Billy? Ten what? Twelve what?”

And of course mother couldn’t know it was little pigs, so Billy told her, and Pat told her, and we all told her.

Then we told her about the apples, and she said it was very wrong, and that it was just as bad as stealing money. So Pat said he took it back, and Miss Flowerdew put it all in her purse.

Then Pat said about the roller, and mother listened, and we all said how we did it, and when we said it went scrash into the stream, Baby said, “Isn’t it funny, mother?” She was sitting on mother’s knee, and

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mother said, “ It was very naughty, and very dangerous.”

And Billy said, “ Yes, I expect it squashed a whole lot of worms.” And I expect it did.

Then we told mother that we went to see Miss Flowerdew, and after she had put the money in her purse she was going to send us away, but we stopped and told her about the roller.

And mother said, “ What did she say ? ” And we said she didn’t say anything. She only rang the bell, and we went.

Then mother said, “ What else did you do ? ”

And we said we had been quite good all the rest of the time, except for some little things.

IX

TONY liked what Billy did about the “wellcomb,” and he made a plan of his very own.

Billy helped him, and he lent him the sticky stuff, and they cut out the letters, and the letters were “wellcomb,” just like Billy’s, only they were gold and not red.

It was Tony’s and Billy’s secret, but we knew.

Mr. Beaufort was away, that’s why Tony wanted to do it, and he did it beautifully, and it took him ever so long.

He did it in the library at Beaufort, and he stuck on the letters all separately on the wall. Then he was so pleased he didn’t know what to do.

People don’t know what to do when they are very pleased.

Then Mr. Beaufort came back, but Tony



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didn't say anything like Billy did to mother, because he didn't like to.

We can always say things to mother. Whenever we like we can. Only not all at the same time. But we do sometimes.

Billy saw the letters because he was there, and he said they looked lovely.

Tony and Billy waited in the library, and when Mr. Beaufort came in he didn't see them because they were standing in the great big window where lots of us can hide ; it is so big.

Then Mr. Beaufort sat down and began to read letters.

Grown-ups always read letters.

And he didn't see the "wellcomb."

Then he looked up and he saw it. Billy said he didn't look like mother looked, all nice and pleased, but he looked angry and he rang the bell, and he said to the butler it

must be taken off at once, and he said it was nonsense, and the wall would be ruined.

So Tony and Billy went out of the room very softly, and they went upstairs and Tony cried.

Billy didn't say he cried so very much, but Scott told Nannie he cried and cried, and Scott put the letters up in her bedroom, at least what was left of the letters, because they were rather spoilt.

Scott loves Tony, and so do we all, and so does Miss Wilhelmina.

We should have thought the “wellcomb” would be sure to soften Mr. Beaufort's heart, but it didn't.

Mother says she thinks Mr. Beaufort was angry, because the walls of the library are really pictures, and they were painted long, long ago by a great artist, and the “wellcomb” might spoil them.

But Billy thinks the walls are hideous old pictures, and he says the “wellcomb” was lovely, because it was gold.

That's all about Tony's “wellcomb.” He doesn't think it is a very good plan putting “wellcombs” on walls when uncles come back, but only when mothers come back.

X

THE next day, just when we were supposing nothing would happen, because there wasn't anything to happen, the most wonderful thing of all happened. We weren't doing anything except just going about when mother called us. We ran like anything, and Pat got there first. Then mother said, “You are the very one I want,” and she put her arm round Pat, and she said, “I want

you one moment.” Then she said we might come too, so we did.

We didn’t know what it could be, because we hadn’t done anything naughty, at least we didn’t remember anything. Then we supposed we had done something without knowing it.

Then mother went to the room where father keeps his guns and fishing-rods, where we don’t so very often go; and she waited at the door and then she opened the door, and she said, “Something very wonderful has happened, Pat—look!”

And Pat looked, and behold there was a new bicycle, a beautiful new bicycle, and on it was tied a label which mother showed Pat. And on the label was written these words—

“For honest Patrick, from a cross old lady.”

Then Pat didn’t say anything, but he got

as red as anything, and mother said, “ For honest Patrick.” And Pat said, “ Is it for me ? ” and mother laughed and nodded her head. And then Pat didn’t say anything, because he couldn’t. He was too pleased to say anything.

It was a lovely bicycle, all bright and shiny, and it had a lamp and a bell, and a watch and a little thing that tells you how far you go. And it had a saddle and a bag behind with things in it, and a pump and all sorts of things.

Then mother said, “ I think I saw something about ‘ Honest Mark.’ ” And so she did, because there was a lovely fishing-rod for Mark. Then Mark got as red as anything.

It was all from Miss Flowerdew.

So she wasn’t cross after all ; and she could forgive like anything.

Better than any one, I should think.

Then we wondered how she knew what the boys wanted more than anything in the whole world.

And mother said she wondered too.

But I expect she knew. I think mothers always know when they say “I wonder.”

And she must have been to see Miss Flowerdew, because she told us it took three men to get the roller out of the stream.

We wished we had seen it.

I expect Miss Flowerdew asked mother what the boys wanted.

So the roller wasn’t lost.

Billy did wish he had listened to the good voice which told Pat to go and tell Miss Flowerdew about the roller ; but he listened to the bad voice, because he said he would rather listen to it that day.

But he listened to the good voice for lots of days after that.

But no one gave him a bicycle or a fishing-rod, and Billy said he didn't see the use of listening to good voices any more.

XI

THEN came the morning when mother was ill, and when we ran to her room like we always do just to say good morning and to show her things, they stopped us, and said “Hush ! ”

But they didn't tell us what was the matter, but we knew it was something, because mother never sends us away unless she's dressing, and then she only says, “Wait a moment, darlings,” and we do.

Then Ellen told us that mother was ill ; and I met Billy coming upstairs, and he was

singing, so I stopped him because mother was ill, and Billy was sad.

Then I met Jack and Pat, and they were singing and whistling too ; and I said mother was ill, and they were sad too, and so was Mark ; and we were as quiet as we could be, and we went and sat in the hayloft, and we didn't say anything.

Then the doctor came, and he stayed ever so long ; and then I ran to ask him how mother was, and he didn't say anything, he just stroked my hair, and still he didn't say anything ; and I met father, and I just touched his hand, and he wouldn't speak ; he only said, “Run away.”

Then I went to Mrs. West, and she only cried, and she gave me some cake. But I didn't want any ; and Nannie wasn't anywhere, so I went back to the boys.

Then Tony came, and we told him ; and

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he didn't say anything, but he went away, and when he didn't come back for ever so long we went to find him, and we found him kneeling in the gooseberry bushes, and we think he was praying that mother would be made well.

So did we all ; but she wasn't. At least not then.

The next day two doctors came, and we didn't know them, because we had never seen them before.

And then we didn't see them properly, but only out of the window, because no one brought us any water for our baths till ever so late, and then Ellen and Emma came, and they were crying, and when we asked them they shook their heads.

Then when I was dressed I went and sat on the mat outside mother's door, and I heard lots of whispers, but no one came.

Then Mrs. White came to see us, and she just squeezed us hard when she kissed us, but she didn't say anything, and Miss Wilhelmina squeezed us hard when she kissed us, but she didn't say anything, and no one told us about mother. Nobody says anything to children when mothers are ill.

Billy brought father some mustard and cress out of his own garden, but father didn't look at it, and we just went about and did nothing.

Then when we were sitting in the hay we heard some one coming, and he said, “Children, where are you ? ” and it was Mr. Black, that's the curate, and he came and he sat in the hay and he took Billy on his knee, and he told us things in a clergyman's voice. This is what he said, at least I think it is—

“ There was once a mother so good and so beautiful that God thought she was quite

ready to go to heaven. So He sent for her. And just as she was going and God had His arms all stretched out, He saw six sad, lonely little children sitting in the hay. And they looked so sad and so lonely that He was sorry for them. And He looked again, and He saw big, strong men crying, and He saw into the poorest cottages in the village where women were crying and praying, and He said He would answer those prayers. He would make those lonely little children happy again, and those big, strong men happy again, and those women happy again.

“ So He said the mother might stay a little longer.”

“ A long time longer,” said Billy.

And Mr. Black said, “ A long time longer, I hope, Billy.” And Billy said, “ Were the six little children us ? ” And Mr. Black

said, “Yes.” And Billy said, “But God made a mistake; there were only five children, because Tony was in the gooseberry bushes.” And then he said, “And you, and daddy, and Mr. White were the strong men?”

And Mr. Black said, “Some of them.”

“And did God hear us pray?”

And Mr. Black said, “Yes.”

And Billy said, “Did He hear Tony when he was in the gooseberry bushes?”

And Mr. Black said he was sure God heard Tony.

Then Tony was pleased.

Then we went in, and father took us into his arms, but he didn’t say anything. But he didn’t tell us to run away.

Nannie was in the nursery and she said we looked very dirty.

But she wasn’t cross.

Then when mother was better I went to

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see her but she didn't say anything. She just smiled.

It was nearly dark, and when I cried father took me away.

The next Sunday in church Mr. White tried to thank God for making mother better, but he couldn't just for a little, because we think he was crying.

Then while he was saying nothing old Mrs. Summer cried out in a loud voice, all by herself—

“Thank you, oh Lord! thank you!” which she oughtn't to have done, because she isn't a clergyman.

Then Mr. White said it all right.

When we told mother she said, “Dear old Betsy! Her life is one long thank you.”

That's what mother said.

I don't know what she meant, but she said it, and I suppose she knows.

Then mother got well, but she didn't get well quite quickly, but she just lay on the sofa, and people brought her flowers, when she had lots of her own ; but she liked it, and the people weren't allowed to see her. But we were.

And father sat and looked at her, and then he smiled. We all smiled because we were happy and we love mother very much.

But when she got better, much better, she went into the garden, and she walked a little, and when she walked just down the path ever such a little way, she said, “ How grand I feel,” when it was only just a little way, and not grand at all.

Then she said she would soon be able to jump the paths, but I don't suppose she would, because mothers don't generally do those sort of things.

The first day mother went out for a drive

“*Things we Thought of*”

the people in the village all stood at the lodge gates, and they waved their handkerchiefs and said things to mother ; and mother smiled and kissed her hand to them, at least I think she did, and they were all pleased that mother was well, and so were we.

Mr. Black said he felt two years old when he couldn't, because he was quite old, only he hadn't got a moustache. But Pat said he could have if he liked, only he didn't because he was a clergyman.

We like Mr. Black.

Mr. White said “Thank God” lots of times when he saw mother the first day she was well ; that's because he's a clergyman, I suppose.

We brought things to mother out of our gardens, and she was pleased.

Then Mark told her what Mr. Black had

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told us, and he said, "God had His arms all stretched out ready; did you know that, mother?"

And mother said, "I thought He had, darling."

And Billy said, "Well, I hope, then, He won't ever do it again."

And mother said, "Billy, Billy!" but she stroked his hair and didn't say anything else.

Billy's hair is curly, and so is all of ours. Biddy's is most.

Then mother got quite well, as she generally is, and she came to see us in bed after dinner, except when visitors were there, and did everything just as she always does.

Then Cynthia was married.



XII

BUT not just then, because we went up to Beaufort one day before Cynthia was married, and we thought of a very good thing.

Mrs. White asked us once to belong to a thing called a Guild, which means you make clothes, at least if you can you make clothes, or you knit things; and then you have to do two things a year, and mother always forgets, so she buys things.

You are only supposed to send two things a year, but mother sends heaps of things—flannel petticoats and shawls, and cross-overs and shirts, and cloaks and heaps of things, and Mrs. White says she doesn't know what she would do without mother.

But mother doesn't make the things; she



buys them, and then they are put away in a cupboard till it's time for them to go.

At Beaufort there is a long gallery—not the picture gallery where we wanted to play cricket—but another one, where there are lots of statues.

Statues are white and haven't any clothes on, at least they haven't generally, and Tony doesn't much like them, and we don't either.

So Tony had a splendid thought. He thought of putting clothes on the statues, but he didn't know where to get the clothes. He didn't know about the Guild things, but we did. They are in a cupboard where Martha puts them, and we told Tony we could use the Guild things, because statues don't wear out clothes, so it wouldn't hurt them. So whenever any of us went to Beaufort we took some clothes, and then

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when we drove in the donkey cart we took a lot; and when there were enough clothes, Tony asked us to tea. And we went.

We went very early, because dressing statues takes a long time. It takes longer than dressing real people, I suppose. It was fun.

I had a lovely statue to do.

I think it is called Venus.

I put on a flannel petticoat first and it was lovely, and then a woolly crossover, and Tony said it did look nice and warm.

Then it had a skirt, only it couldn't have a bodice because the arms were wrong, so it only had the crossover and then a hood.

The boys had nice statues too, and they dressed some in shirts and flannel petticoats, and some in other things, and they put hoods and Tam o' Shanters on their heads, and they looked nice and funny.

Then when they were all done and we were just resting, we heard lots of voices coming in the distance, and the most awful thing happened. We forgot it was the day for the people to come.

On Tuesday any one may come and look at Beaufort if they like, and lots of people always come.

When we heard them coming quite near, Pat said, “ Hide,” and we all hid behind some curtains.

Then we heard Warden say what he always says when he comes to the statues—

“ This is considered the finest—” and then he stopped, and Pat stuffed some of the curtain into his mouth so as not to make a noise laughing, and we nearly made a noise because it was so funny.

We looked through the curtains and we saw Warden looking at my Venus. I don’t

suppose he thought the Venus would have a red petticoat and a skirt and a crossover and a hood on, and that's why he looked surprised.

Then every one laughed, at least some of them did. But Warden didn't. He never laughs.

One old lady said, “ I think it looks very cheerful. I never did understand ladies and gentlemen having such things in their houses, but now they look very nice and decent.” Then some one who looked very grand said it was dreadful, and they were angry, and Warden said—

“ It's Master Patrick, I'm sure.”

Then they went away, and we came out and we did laugh.

Then Tony said, “ Don't they look nice ? I am sure Uncle Robert would like them much better like this.”

But then Warden came back and he told Tony to undress the statues as quickly as he could because Mr. Beaufort would be very angry; and he said the whole country would hear of it, and all the people would come to see the statues.

And Tony said, “That’s because they look so nice.” And Tony said, “Don’t they, Warden?”

But Warden wouldn’t say anything.

But we think he liked them very much.

Then we discovered that Pat and Tony knew about the people coming all the time.

Pat said they chose the day on purpose, which was much naughtier than not knowing they were coming. Then we undressed the statues and we had tea.



XIII

THEN Cynthia was married, and we all went to stay there, and it was lovely.

She wasn't married in London, but in the country, and Billy was a page. A page means when boys walk behind and hold up trains and are dressed in white.

That's what Billy was ; he walked beside a little girl, and she held up Cynthia's train too, but she wasn't a page. She was a bridesmaid.

Baby was a bridesmaid too, and there were lots of others too.

Then there were arches, all the way to the church, of flowers with things written on them.

Billy says, “ I hope you are quite well,” was written on one of them, but I don't



suppose it was. I think it was “ I hope you will be happy,” or something like that ; and the bells rang and the sun was shining.

Then we all got to the church.

Biddy had a white dress and a white hat, and so did I.

Then when we waited a little the page-boys, I mean the pages and the bridesmaids, came, and they stood by the door, and Baby looked such a darling and so did Billy, and they didn’t smile once. Then the organ played, and then Cynthia came, and she looked just like an angel all white and shining, and lots of people said, “ Doesn’t she look lovely ? ” and Gerald was waiting for her, and he smiled. I suppose he was glad to see her, because he had been waiting such a long time.

Then the clergyman began.

There were lots of clergymen, but one said

most, and he asked Gerald questions, and Nannie said Gerald spoke up beautifully.

I didn't hear what he said, but I think the clergyman asked him if he would be kind to Cynthia, and Gerald said, “I will.”

Then the clergyman asked Cynthia things. I suppose he asked her if she would be kind to Gerald, and she said, “I will,” but we didn't hear it.

Then the clergyman said more things, and Billy said in a loud voice, “When may I play with my girl?” which he oughtn't to have done, because it was in church.

Then I think Gerald and Cynthia were married, because there was a hymn and then they all went into the vestry, and we went too, and every one kissed Cynthia and then we went back to the church, and then the organ played again, and Cynthia and Gerald came, and they were smiling, and Cynthia



hadn't got the veil over her face, and she looked all smiling and pleased.

The sun was shining like anything, and Cynthia walked down a path to the carriage, and the people threw flowers, and Cynthia stopped and kissed a little child, and she gave it some of her bouquet, and then she got into the carriage. And they all said, “Bless her.”

Then we got into a carriage and drove with mother.

Billy wouldn't leave go of his little girl's hand all the afternoon.

The little girl wanted to, but Billy wouldn't let her.

And then every one looked at the presents; and we looked to see if what we gave Cynthia was there, and it was. It was a present from all of us.

Tony's was separate.

I don't see why Cynthia wanted so many presents, because she couldn't want so many all at once.

There were lots of diamonds, but mother doesn't wear diamonds every day, so I don't suppose Cynthia would. Then there were lots of things to eat, which people did for ever so long. Then Cynthia went upstairs to take off her lovely dress, and we went with her, and we touched the dress when it was on the bed, because she said we might, and she put on another white dress, and she put on the bangle we gave her, and she said she loved it.

Then when she was ready she went down, and she said, “good-bye,” and Uncle James and Aunt Cecilia nearly cried, and some other people too, but we didn't, because there wasn't anything to cry about. Then Gerald and Cynthia went in a coach with

four horses and Gerald drove, and we watched and watched and waved and waved, and Cynthia turned round and waved, but Gerald didn't. I suppose because he was driving.

Nannie says I must always look at the grey pony when I'm driving in case he does anything, but he doesn't do anything except shiver and stand still.

Then we couldn't see Gerald and Cynthia any more. So they were married.

Billy thinks he will be married after all.

He thinks he would like to, because of the four horses. We told him perhaps he wouldn't have them, and he said he might have them just as well as Gerald. He didn't see why he shouldn't. Then Jack said Gerald was very rich, and Billy said he was going to be rich too. And we said we didn't suppose he was, at least not so very

rich. And he said he had two pounds in his money-box. So we didn't say anything more because Billy wouldn't listen.

Then we sat up ever so late, and there was a ball and we danced.

We danced with grown-ups.

One grown-up's watch-chain scratched Biddy's nose when she was dancing, because her nose just reached to his watch-chain. It wasn't his fault, and Biddy didn't mind.

We heard some one say, “Who is that beautiful woman ? ” and it was mother.

We told the person it was our mother, and he said, “ You are fortunate little girls.”

Then we went to bed. Nannie thinks Gerald looked beautiful, and she said Cynthia was the most beautiful bride next to mother. Nannie saw mother when she was being married. She often tells us about it. Baby

says she remembers it because she was there, but she wasn't really.

Then we went to sleep. We wish there were weddings every day, but I don't suppose there could be very well.

XIV

THERE was only one more thing happened before lessons began, and that was when Jack and Pat and Mark and Tony were lost.

Boys being lost is worse than rollers.

We didn't know they were lost just at first, because they often did things and didn't come home for a little.

Father says he likes them to be allowed to do what they like if they don't do wicked things, and they often do things and don't come home to dinner.

But tea came and they didn't come, and



“Things we Thought of”

dinner—I mean father's and mother's dinner—came and they didn't come, and bed-time came and they didn't come.

Then mother got frightened, and she went out and she listened, but she didn't hear anything, at least not boys. She heard lots of other things.

Then father said, “This is serious. Something must be done.”

Mother had sent up to Beaufort long before to know if they were there, and they weren't, and Tony wasn't there either.

Then Mr. Beaufort came down and he looked as serious as anything, and he walked up and down the drawing-room, and father said, “What must be done?”

And Mr. Beaufort said everything must be done. And he said the whole country must be searched, and heaps and heaps of men sent out. And so they were.

Mr. Beaufort and father went out too, but there were no boys anywhere.

Bert, that's the garden boy, searched in the gooseberry bushes all the time when we told him it wasn't any use, because Ellen had been looking there all the afternoon. But still he would.

Then Billy said it wasn't any use looking any more, because they were lost, and when he lost his spade it was just the same ; he looked and looked, but he never found it again, and he didn't suppose he ever would.

Then mother made us go to bed, but we didn't want to go, and Billy wished he was lost too.

He said it wasn't fair of the boys to be lost without him.

We didn't want to go to sleep, but we did, because our eyes just shut and we couldn't help it. But Billy tied a string on to his toe

— — — “Things we Thought of”

to stop himself going to sleep, and he kept on pulling it.

But he went to sleep ; so I suppose he forgot to pull the string.

He thought the boys would come home while he was asleep, but they didn’t.

Mother didn’t go to bed, and Miss Wilhelmina stayed with her all night.

Then breakfast came, and there were no boys.

Then mother got more frightened, and all the men came back, and they said the boys weren’t anywhere.

Then mother didn’t say anything, but she didn’t look like she generally does.

She didn’t smile once.

Then Mr. Beaufort came and mother held his hand and Miss Wilhelmina’s hand, and she said, “ It will come right,” and Mr. Beaufort said—

“Remember, he’s all I’ve got,” and Miss Wilhelmina cried.

I don’t know what Mr. Beaufort meant, I don’t suppose he meant Tony, because he didn’t so very much like Tony. But mother looked a little pleased, but not very, because she was too sad.

Then Mr. Beaufort went.

Then in the afternoon Mrs. West sent to say she would like to see mother, and she came and she told mother she had found lots of things gone out of the larder and store cupboard, and she thought the young gentlemen might be ‘hiding somewhere.

Then mother said “Oh!” and she sent for father and father told Mr. Beaufort, and then every one was told to look for hiding-places.

And mother cried, and Miss Wilhelmina

cried, and Mr. Beaufort hid his face in his hands.

Father said why didn't Mrs. West say so before, and while he was saying it, behold ! Jack and Pat and Mark and Tony walked in, all dirty and smiling, and mother said "Oh !" and she held out her arms. But father said "No ! "

That was because he was seriously angry with them, and he told them they had nearly made mother very ill, and Miss Wilhelmina very ill, and he asked them where they had been. And they didn't want to say and then they did, and they had been in a sand pit which they had discovered and they were pretending to be smugglers. They would have told us lots more, only father stopped them.

He took them away and he spoke to them for a long time and told them lots of things, but I don't know what.

Then came very sad days because the boys weren't allowed to do jolly things, and they weren't allowed to ride. They were very sad because they didn't mean to frighten mother, and they said it was such fun in the cave, and Biddy thinks it must have been lovely, and so do I.

Then when we went to see the cave it was gone!

Father said that's why it was so very dangerous. The boys might have been buried alive, and so they would have if they hadn't come back in time. So father was quite right to be angry.

Billy says he supposes if they had been buried alive there wouldn't have been a proper funeral.

Tony didn't come for lots of days, and when he came we asked him what Mr. Beaufort did.

And Tony said, “ He didn’t do anything except come and look at me in bed. I think he was glad I was found and not lost.”

So Mr. Beaufort’s heart began to be softened towards Tony.

XV

THEN came a very sad day. It was when the boys went back to school. At least Jack and Pat and Mark did, but not Billy, because he isn’t old enough. We don’t tell him that because he doesn’t like it.

Tony didn’t go to school either.

Well, I must tell you what Pat did the day he went back to school, because it was a good thing to think of.

Mother gave him a post-card, like she always gives the boys, for him to send when he got to school to say he was all right.

Jack and Mark wrote theirs when they got to school like they were supposed to, but Pat wrote his before he went and said, “I arrived all right. A lot of us went in the train together. One boy was sick out of the window.” Then he left it on mother’s writing-table just till it was dry, so she saw it and she said, “What’s this, Pat?” and Pat said he wrote it before he started just to save the bother of writing when he got there, and mother said about the boy being sick out of the window, and Pat said, “Well, he always is, so it’s all right.”

I don’t see how Pat could tell if the boy was sure to be sick, because he mightn’t be. And I don’t think it’s much use writing post-cards before you go, but Pat says it’s all the same ; boys always get to school all right.

Then Madielle came back the next day,

and we were very good just for the day, but I don't think we were very good when we began lessons.

I don't suppose children can be very good, at least not frightfully good, when they have to do lessons indoors when it's all sunshiny outdoors, because they want to go out and they can't.

Baby doesn't do so many lessons, not proper lessons.

Mother teaches her a little, and one day mother was teaching her to read, and she said—

“ Now, Baby, what is D-O-G ? ” and Baby said “ rhionoceros,” but it wasn't, really ; it was dog.

Then mother said, “ Baby, listen ! D—O—G,” and mother said it very slowly, and Baby said “ hippopotamus.”

Then the door opened suddenly, and

Biddy came in, and she said, “Baby ! D-O-G ! Quick !” And Baby said—

“ Oh, mercy, it’s a dog ! oh, mercy, it’s a dog ! ” So she knew all the time. She was just pretending. She was frightened when Biddy came. Biddy isn’t really cross, only Baby says she would like to be.

Biddy is very good at lessons sometimes ; and she can play the piano like anything. She can cross hands.

When we had been doing lessons a few days Biddy wrote an essay on music.

I didn’t, because I didn’t know what to say, but Biddy wrote one.

It was just like a real essay.

This is what she said.

It was called “ Music ”—that’s all.

She didn’t give it a proper name, because she didn’t know one.

“ Music is of all arts the most beautiful !

— — “Things we Thought of”

“To think that a man who is a sinner could compose such beautiful airs as those of Mendelssohn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert.

“The melody which gives such emotional pleasure to the people who go to hear it.

“It is very interesting to read about the great players, how, from their boyhood, they took up that wonderful scheme of playing.

“But now I must turn to the thoughts of music !

“The soldiers going to battle, when they hear the band it cheers their lonesome hearts, and also gives them courage to face their enemies who come forth to kill, perhaps to slay, many of our brave men.

“When you are alone, if you play it seems to keep you company ; and if you were not fond of playing you would feel so lonely.

“ ‘ Is there a heart that music cannot melt ? ’ Alas, alas ! I think there are many that it would not make the slightest impression on.

“ When they hear the sweet sounds coming forth to their ears, you would think it is hardly possible that it would not soften their hearts ; but it goes in at one ear and out of the other. Sometimes, in the twilight, when you hear the church chimes ringing so sweetly, it is so beautiful to sit down and hear them ringing in the distance. Some people do not care for that either.

“ Music has a great effect on that beast called the serpent. If you begin to sing or play it will follow you. It is very fond of music.

“ The birds’ songs are very beautiful.

“ The lark that soars up into the sky till

it's out of sight. The nightingale and many others are very nice.

“If on earth such music comes out of those little birds, how must the angels and birds sing in heaven? Then we shall hear those words in the ‘Lost Chord.’ We shall hear that Grand Amen.”

Madielle told Biddy about how the angels would sing in heaven if the birds sang so beautifully on earth. Some great man said it, but all the rest was Biddy's own—except some.

But she doesn't like playing the piano all alone, she likes me to stay too. Only it's an essay, so it's not quite true, but it nearly all is.

I think it's very like a real essay. Billy isn't supposed to do lessons in the afternoon, but one day Madielle called him. It was in the afternoon, so Billy didn't want to come,

but he did, because we always go when we're called, at least we generally do, if we hear.

And when Billy came Madielle said she wanted him to do some lessons, and Billy said—

“I've walked with you a hour, I've talked with you a hour, I've read with you a hour. What more do you want ? ”

Madielle didn't say anything, because I don't suppose she knew what to say because Billy had done all those things.

So Billy went, and he didn't do any more lessons that day. He caught newts:

Biddy got four marks for her essay.

Then we got a letter from Mark, and he said that he and the other boy had got a new carpet for their study, and Mark said, “Parker chose it, and I paid for it.”

I expect it was a very nice carpet.



Tony didn't do lessons with us, except French. He says he likes French, but he doesn't know any. He has chocolates when he does French, but he doesn't when he does English.

Madielle wanted us to learn about the stars, so we went out one evening when it was very late, and we put shawls over our heads and our bodies too, and just as she was going to tell us about the stars she heard a horse trotting on the road ever so far off, and she was so frightened she ran indoors as fast as anything, and she wouldn't come out again because she said it wasn't safe when it was quite, because the horse was ever so far off. So we didn't learn about the stars. But Biddy liked it, and so did I, and we did laugh.

Nothing very nice happens when we do lessons, so there isn't very much to say.

"Things we Thought of"



When we do lessons mother has people to stay, because when the boys are at home there isn't so very much room, and mother doesn't think visitors like so many children. And we don't like visitors.

Visitors never make us laugh. And they don't like when you do things.

Aunt Susan says we make her nervous.

Billy put his newts in her bath, just for a treat for her, but she didn't like it. They were very nice newts, and wouldn't hurt any one. But I told Billy he wasn't to put them in my bath.

When Aunt Susan saw them in her bath she just rang the bell like anything, and when Martha went Aunt Susan showed her the newts, and said they were horrible, when they weren't, and Martha emptied the poor newts away; and Billy was very angry, and he said she would be



"Things we Thought of"

sorry some day ; but I don't suppose she will be.

Aunt Susan didn't stay so very long, and we were glad, because she doesn't like jolly things like we do.

Baby loves dressing up, so one day when no one was looking she went into Aunt Susan's room, and she took Aunt Susan's bonnet and she put it on, and it was much too big ; Baby could hardly see out of it, but she didn't mind, and then she put on Aunt Susan's veil, and she was pleased.

She wished she could wear veils always, but she didn't, because she wasn't old enough.

Then she got a sunshade and a muff, and a tablecloth for a train, and all sorts of things.

Then she put a flower in each buttonhole. There were six flowers, because there are six buttonholes in her white coat.

Then she went for a walk, and she was pleased. So were we when we saw her, because she looked so funny. We had been for a walk, and when we were coming home just near the gates we saw Baby in the distance.

We didn't know what it could be, because the bonnet looked so funny.

Madielle thought it was a bonnet out walking by itself, and she was quite frightened. But we told her bonnets never walked by themselves, and she said she thought anything might happen in our family.

Then we did laugh when we saw that Baby had a muff and a sunshade and a tablecloth for a train, as well as the bonnet and the veil.

But Madielle didn't laugh, she said how could Baby be out by herself, and she said

it wasn't safe, but it was quite safe. Baby often runs away when Nannie isn't looking and when Emma isn't looking, but Nannie always finds her again, and she tells her she is a naughty girl, only she doesn't mean it, at least not seriously.

Then when Baby saw us getting near she turned round for us to see the bonnet behind. And Madielle said, “Oh! these children!” but I do not know why.

Then she said Baby was very naughty to take Aunt Susan's bonnet, and she took it off Baby's head, and she dropped it by mistake.

Then a most awful thing happened, only it was fun. Bracken, that's our puppy, who is such a darling, picked it up, and he ran away with it, and he shook it like anything, and Madielle screamed, and she said to Bracken, “Stop it!” and of course

Bracken didn't understand, because people never say “Stop it!” to puppies, but they say “Drop it!” and puppies don't.

But dogs do sometimes, but not always.

Bracken only wagged his tail like anything.

Then Madielle told us to tell him, but we couldn't, because we laughed so much, and she said, “Children, tell him at once, this very moment, to stop it,” but we couldn't.

And Bracken ran away when we tried to catch him, and Madielle screamed, “Stop it! Stop it, doggie! Stop it!” but Bracken didn't, he ran away worse than before, and then he began to eat Aunt Susan's bonnet like anything. Madielle screamed and Baby cried and Biddy and I laughed so much we didn't know what to do. But it isn't very good for bonnets to be eaten.

Then when we got better we made Bracken drop it, only he had eaten nearly all of it.

So we went in and Biddy carried the bonnet, and Madielle said Bracken was very naughty when he wasn't, because he is a puppy and doesn't know.

We went to the drawing-room to see if Aunt Susan would say anything about her bonnet being lost. But she didn't. We wished she would. But I expect she didn't know Baby had taken it. She said that Bracken was a good dog, so that shows she didn't guess what he had done. We were only looking at her and wondering what she would say if she knew, when she said, “ What's the matter ? ” and Biddy said, “ Nothing. ” Then Aunt Susan said, “ Dont stare, dears ; it makes me nervous, ” just like Lady Theodosia said at Beaufort. Grown-ups don't much like children looking at them, but I do not know why.

XVI

THEN nothing very much happened till Christmas, and then lovely things happened, because the boys came home.

They brought us presents, only we weren't supposed to know. Jack showed me the shape of my present, and he told me to guess what it was.

It was wrapped up in paper, so I couldn't guess right. I don't suppose any one could—at least not first go off.

Then when I didn't guess right, Jack told me it was something for my very own writing-table. Then I guessed it was a vase, and Jack said no, because vases weren't for writing-tables ; and I said they were sometimes, because mother had some on her writing-table, but Jack said, “ Well, it isn't a vase.” Then I guessed it was an ink-bottle,

and Jack said he wouldn't say yes or no, so I knew it was, and it was. Because when people won't say yes or no it means it is.

I didn't know then, I only guessed, and I guessed right. We had presents for the boys too. Pat felt my present which I had for him, and he said it was a knife, and so it was. Knives always feel like knives, but other things don't.

Then Christmas came. In the morning we went to sing carols outside mother's door. We got up very early, when it was quite dark, and we didn't dress properly. We just put on our slippers and our dressing-gowns, and Nannie came and fetched us, like she always does on Christmas Day, and she said, “Hush!” and we went very softly, so as not to make a noise, and then, when we got outside mother's door, Nannie said, “One, two, three, ‘Hark!’” And we all

said “ Hark ! ” all at once, or else it isn’t right ; and then we went on—“ the Herald Angels sing.” And then we sang, “ Sing we all merrily, Christmas is here.” And sometimes we sing, “ Once in Royal David’s city,” but not always. Then mother said “ Come in,” and we went.

Then we gave our presents, and we got our presents, and they were lovely.

We only get little presents in our stockings, and then more little ones on mother’s bed, and then, in the afternoon, big ones.

Tony used to practise “ Hark, the Herald Angels sing,” and the other things too, with us, but he couldn’t sing outside mother’s door, because he was at Beaufort ; but he had a very nice thought. It was his own idea. He told us about it afterwards.

He got up very, very early, when it was as

dark as anything, and he put on his dressing-gown, but not his slippers, because he forgot those, and he went such a long way all by himself to Mr. Beaufort's door, which was frightfully brave of him, and he began, “ One, two, three, ‘ Hark, the Herald Angels sing,’ ” and he sang all the verses, and then he stopped for a minute ; and then he sang “ Sing we all merrily, Christmas is here,” and then he stopped for a little ; and then he sang “ Once in Royal David's city ” as loud as ever he could.

Then he waited and waited, and Mr. Beaufort didn't say anything.

I expect he didn't hear, only I should think people would always hear carols outside their door.

Then Tony went outside Miss Wilhelmina's door, and he began to sing, and he sang “ Hark the Herald Angels sing ” as

loud as ever he could, and “Sing we all merrily, Christmas is here”; but he didn’t sing “Once in Royal David’s city” because he didn’t suppose it was any use when nobody heard.

So he went back to bed, and I think he was very sad; anyhow, he was cold.

He asked us what mother said when we sang, and we told him she said, “Come in,” and lots of other Christmas things. But nobody said anything to Tony, because they didn’t hear him, I suppose. So it wasn’t much use singing.

We think it was because Tony’s voice isn’t very loud. But he said it was frightfully loud, because he sang as hard as ever he could. But I don’t expect it was so very loud.

Jack says he expects Tony got up in the middle of the night and not in the morning

∞ ∞ “Things we Thought of”

at all, but Tony says he doesn't suppose he did.

He says he sang all the verses quite right, without forgetting one single line.

He came to see us in the afternoon, and he gave us all presents, and we gave him presents, and he liked Christmas very much. So do we all, because it's nice.

Tony did want some brothers and sisters, and he said he would pray to God, and then He would send him some ; but we said we didn't suppose He would.

And Tony said, “ When God sees me being lonely He'll send me some brothers and sisters.”

Billy said he didn't suppose God would ever send babies to such a frightfully big house as Beaufort, because they mightn't ever be noticed. But Tony said he would

be sure to notice them, but Billy didn't expect he would.

Then Tony said didn't God ever send babies to frightfully big houses? and Billy said, “No, only to houses like ours, and littler sort of houses.”

Then Tony said he would live in a littler sort of house. But we told him he couldn't, because he was going to live always at Beaufort.

Then Tony was sad, so Nannie told him God had sent him some brothers and sisters already. And Tony said, “Where? where?” and he ran about like anything, and he went and looked in the cupboard where we keep our toys—at least we do when we're tidy, but we aren't always tidy—and Tony said “Where?” and he jumped for joy, but he said he couldn't find any.

Then he said, “Where, Nannie; truthfully, where?”

And Nannie said, “Here.”

Then Tony stood quite still, and he looked and looked, and Nannie said it was all of us.

Then Tony said, “Are they the same as brothers and sisters?”

And Nannie said we were just as good, and she said about Jack and Mark being just like real brothers. And so they are. So Tony was pleased.

He isn’t so very good at understanding things. But mother says we must remember that he hadn’t any one to tell him things like we have, because his mother went to heaven when he was quite little, and mothers tell children things. Fathers do too, at least, I think they do, but mothers tell most. They know a whole lot of things.

Then Miss Wilhelmina came to tea, and when we were having tea she asked Tony if he was happy, and Tony said “Yes.”

Then Billy said, “He wasn’t so very happy this morning,” and Miss Wilhelmina said, “Tony not happy this morning,” and she looked at Tony and Tony didn’t say anything, and we made faces at Billy because he oughtn’t to have told, because it was a tremendous secret of Tony’s very own and ours.

Then Miss Wilhelmina said—

“Have you been making Tony unhappy, Billy?” and Billy said—

“No; it was you,” and Billy nodded and then he said, “Tony sang carols outside your door this morning, a whole lot like we do outside mother’s, and you never said ‘Come in,’ or any Christmas things.”

And Miss Wilhelmina said—

“ Carols, Tony ? What does Billy mean ? ”

And Billy said, “ You tell her, Tony.”

And Tony got as red as anything, and he said, “ I sang one, two, three, ‘ Hark, the Herald Angels sing,’ and ‘ Sing we all merrily, Christmas is here,’ ” and Billy said, “ And ‘ Once in Royal David’s city,’ ” and Tony said, “ No ; that was outside Uncle Robert’s door.”

And Miss Wilhelmina said—

“ You didn’t sing outside my door, Tony.”

And Billy said, “ Yes, he did ; two outside your door, and three outside Mr. Beaufort’s, and nobody heard.”

And Miss Wilhelmina said, “ Oh ! Tony,” and Tony said, “ It doesn’t matter, thank you.”

Then after tea we told him he mustn’t say

“One, two, three, ‘Hark, the Herald Angels sing.’” “One, two, three,” was only what Nannie said to make us begin right, and Tony said he didn’t know. So we told him he could sing it right next Christmas, and he said he didn’t suppose he would sing again outside doors when nobody heard, but I expect he will. So it was all right, and Tony wasn’t unhappy any more.

XVII

THEN after Christmas, a long time after Christmas, at least a good long time after, there was a grand supper at Beaufort, when all the gardeners and coachmen, and all the other sort of men came to the supper, and there were speeches and all sorts of things, and we went because Tony was there. But we didn’t sit near Tony. He sat next to



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Mr. Beaufort, and we sat next to Miss Wilhelmina, and not near the table, but on a sort of platform ever so far off.

Mr. Beaufort and Tony didn't eat things, but Mr. Beaufort said things and Tony said things too, only he wasn't supposed to. He didn't say things at first, only afterwards.

Every one cheered like anything all the time, but I do not know why.

I expect it was because they felt happy. We did. When we went into the room, it wasn't a room really, it was bigger than a room, they all stood up.

And the room which wasn't really a room, because it was so big, was all decorated and it looked lovely.

There was holly, and mistletoe, and candles, and all sorts of things.

Then Mr. Beaufort made a speech, and

the men cheered and cheered at everything he said, but we didn't hear. Then Mr. Beaufort said something about Tony, and he laid his hand on Tony's shoulder, and we didn't quite understand, and Tony didn't either. But Miss Wilhelmina understood, because she looked at mother and she smiled, and mother smiled back ; then Miss Wilhelmina nearly cried, but we didn't.

The men cheered and cheered because of what Mr. Beaufort had said, and then they stopped and Mr. Beaufort said he hoped they would be good and faithful servants to Tony like they had been to him, or something like that. Mr. Beaufort didn't say Tony, he said Master Anthony, he always calls him Anthony, but we don't.

Then the men cheered worse than ever, and they did make a noise.

Then Juniper got up and he said they

would be proud when that day came, and then he said he didn't mean to say that, and he kept on saying things wrong.

Mother says he meant to say that they all hoped Mr. Beaufort would live many years, but that when Tony was master they would serve him faithfully ; which was a very good thing to say, only Juniper couldn't say it quite right.

Then Mr. Pettifer was told to make a speech, because he is the very oldest servant at Beaufort, and he said he couldn't get up because of the rheumatics, and then every one cheered. I think people ought to say they are sorry when some one has rheumatics, but they cheered like anything, and they said he must make a speech.

So Pettifer tried to get up, but he couldn't, and Mr. Beaufort told him not to, so he didn't.



Then he tried to make a speech, but he couldn't. I expect it was because he was so old, but mother says he was nearly crying because he was so glad to see Tony at Beaufort, and because he remembered Tony's father when he was smaller than Tony, ever so much smaller.

Anyhow, he couldn't make a speech ; he only looked at Tony, and he said, “ Master Anthony ! ” And then every one cheered and cheered and cheered, and Pettifer tried to make a proper speech, but he couldn't, he only said, “ God bless him ! ” and then he couldn't go on, so every one cheered again.

Then Tony didn't know what to do ; he thought he was supposed to make a speech when he wasn't really, but he did, only it wasn't a proper speech. He got up and he said, “ I hope Mr. Pettifer's rheumatism



will be better by then,” and Tony got as red as anything, and every one cheered and cheered, and Tony got up again and said, “God bless Mr. Pettifer!” That’s because Pettifer “God blessed” Tony.

Tony always does things back, when they are nice things.

Then Mr. Beaufort smiled at Tony, and he looked very pleased, and he said something to Tony which we didn’t hear.

And every one cheered and cheered and cheered, and I don’t know why they made such a noise.

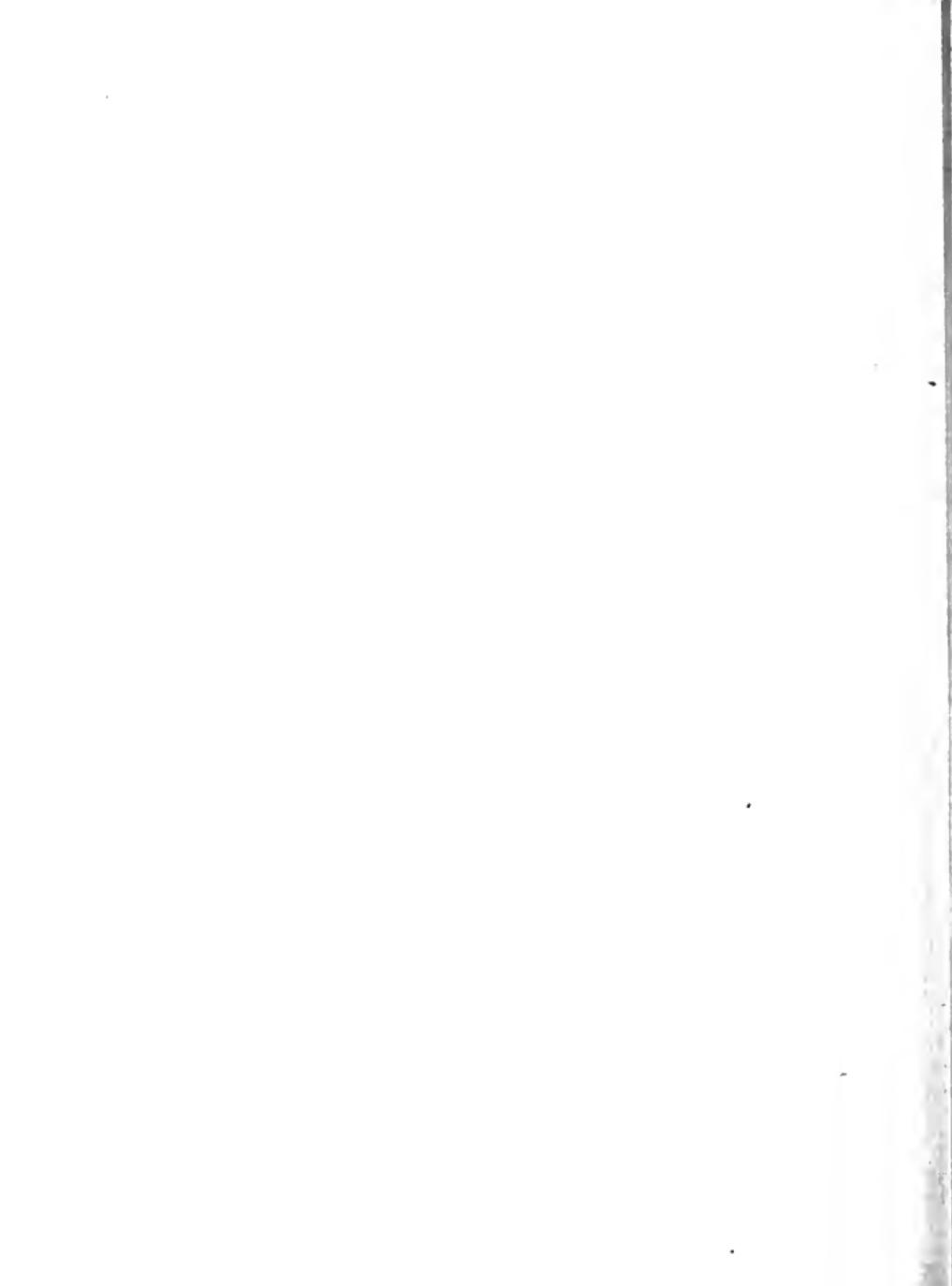
We think it was because Mr. Beaufort’s heart was softened towards Tony.

Then——that’s all.

THE END

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